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New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Zambrana
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2017/824)

Special report of the Secretary-General on the strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2017/826)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2017/824)

Special report of the Secretary-General on the strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2017/826)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Security Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Maman Sidikou, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/824, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/826, which contains the special report of the Secretary-General on the strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Sidikou.

Mr. Sidikou: I would like to thank the members of the Security Council for the opportunity to brief them today on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I would first like to take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences and sympathy to the families, as well as to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, for the deaths of the two Tanzanian peacekeepers killed in an attack on 9 October by the Allied Democratic Forces on the Mamundioma base of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). I condemn it and all attacks on MONUSCO personnel, who serve the cause of peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As the Council is aware, in recent months the challenges related to the implementation of the Comprehensive and Inclusive Political Agreement of 31 December 2016 have unfortunately persisted. The broad consensus achieved among key political actors with the Agreement's signing has not been maintained consistently throughout the year, specifically as that relates to the transitional oversight mechanism — the Conseil national de suivi de l'accord — and to the implementation of confidence-building measures for sealing the Agreement and the electoral timelines. Recently, discussions have centred on the notion that elections will most probably not be held before the end of 2017, unlike what was foreseen in the Agreement. That has generated new political debate around the varying interpretations of the Agreement, particularly with regard to the implementation of the transitional arrangement in the future. Regrettably that has led in turn to the re-emergence of a climate of political uncertainty and tension.

It was in the light of those developments that on the sidelines of the opening of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, the United Nations convened a side event on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The meeting welcomed the authorities' commitment to respecting the Constitution and stressed the need for further confidence-building measures to establish conditions conducive to ensuring the successful conclusion of the electoral process. The participants once again reaffirmed the centrality of the Agreement of 31 December 2016 and the importance of ensuring its full implementation in order to pave the way for the timely holding of free, fair, peaceful and credible elections. The discussions during the event acknowledged the progress made by the Independent National Electoral Commission with the voter

registration process and stressed the need for publishing an electoral calendar as soon as possible and providing a budget for the elections. The Congolese stakeholders were also urged to step up their efforts to prepare for the timely holding of free, fair, peaceful and credible presidential and legislative elections in accordance with the Agreement and, at the same time, to take additional confidence-building measures to establish an environment conducive to a successful conclusion of the electoral process.

In that regard, I would like to turn to two specific points — progress with regard to the holding of elections, and the establishment of conditions conducive to that. With regard to the first point, although the publication of an electoral calendar and a budget remain key milestones in the political process and will be essential to lowering political tensions and uncertainty as to a way forward, it is important to note that progress has been made with voter registration. As of mid-September, the Electoral Commission had registered more than 41 million voters. Women represented 48 per cent of registered voters, a slightly lower figure than in 2006, 2011 and 2016. In early September, voter-registration training began in the Kasai and Kasai Central provinces, the last remaining provinces in the country to undergo that process.

However, there is still uncertainty about the registration of members of the diaspora, the mode of voting and the timeline for enacting critical legislation. Regrettably, the financial resources required to ensure sustained progress towards the holding of elections are not yet forthcoming. The Commission is still underfunded, and the multi-partner basket support fund for the Project of Assistance to the Electoral Cycle in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, managed by the United Nations Development Programme, has reached only 6 per cent of the estimated $123 million required. Nor has MONUSCO been provided with any additional resources to support the updating of the voter registry or the broader electoral process. That is in large part due to the uncertainties about the electoral calendar and the political process going forward. The establishment of conditions conducive to the holding of elections depends largely on the implementation of confidence-building measures.

I have consistently reminded all stakeholders of their responsibility to ensure respect for rights and freedoms during this period of heightened political uncertainty. That will require full implementation of all the confidence-building measures stipulated in the Agreement, ensuring the opening of the political space and full respect for human rights, including respect for everyone's political rights and freedoms, including freedom of opinion and expression and the right to peaceful assembly. The United Nations is concerned about the fact that journalists, political opponents and civil society activists continue to be subject to intimidation, harassment and violence, mostly in connection with their activities and the expression of their opinions concerning the political process. I have repeatedly called for such actions to stop and for the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to be fully respected so as to establish conditions conducive to the holding of credible and peaceful elections.

(*spoke in French*)

In these politically uncertain circumstances, the security situation in several regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has deteriorated further, with an increase in targeted attacks on the national security forces by Mayi-Mayi groups. In North Kivu, repeated Mayi-Mayi attacks on Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) positions have been taking place in an environment marked by tensions between the Hutu and Nande communities. The so-called Allied Democratic Forces have also attempted to seize several FARDC positions. In South Kivu, Mayi-Mayi groups have been carrying out attacks on several strategic FARDC installations since the end of June. Less than two weeks ago, Mayi-Mayi Yakutumba mounted an attack on Uvira, the second-largest city in South Kivu province, and was only repulsed thanks to a rapid and robust response from MONUSCO and exemplary coordination with the FARDC. The complexity of the current situation in South Kivu was tragically illustrated on 15 September when, in clashes with Burundian asylum seekers, Congolese security forces resorted to excessive force, resulting in 37 Burundians killed and 117 wounded. One FARDC soldier was also killed, and six FARDC soldiers and one national police officer were wounded. That tragedy should never have happened. We should add that, following that incident, two members of the FARDC were arrested, and MONUSCO initiated an investigation into the Blue Helmets' response during those events.

Besides the situation in North and South Kivu, in Tanganyika province the clashes between the Twa and

Luba militias have again increased, against the backdrop of a resurgence in Mayi-Mayi Kata-Katanga activities and emerging divisions among several Twa militias. The security situation in the western part of the country remains volatile, following major clashes between the Bundu Dia Mayala political-religious sect and security forces in Kinshasa and Kongo Central. Violent incidents continue in the Kasai region, involving clashes between Kamuina Nsapu militia and security forces as well as inter-ethnic conflicts. I firmly condemn the attacks by the Kamuina Nsapu, the recruitment of children and the targeting of schools, churches and other protected sites, as well as the incidents of disproportionate use of force and deliberate targeting of civilians attributed to the Congolese armed forces. The violence must stop and its perpetrators must be held accountable.

The impact of the deteriorating security situation on civilian life is clearly visible. Between June and August, MONUSCO identified 1,329 cases of violations or abuses of human rights. Armed groups carried out 533 attacks, while State actors accounted for 769 violations, of which 27 per cent were attributed to the armed forces and 24 per cent to national police. On top of that, the worsening humanitarian situation is clear evidence of the impact of the conflict on the civilian population. We estimate that about 8.5 million people, including 5.5 million children, are currently in need of humanitarian assistance. The number of internally displaced persons has reached 3.8 million, and more than 621,000 Congolese have sought refuge in various areas of the subregion, such as Angola, Zambia and so forth. In the Kasai region alone, some 2.8 million people are facing critical levels of food insecurity, and more than 1.5 million children continue to face the risk of violence, displacement and loss of access to education and medical services.

Despite the significant challenges that the evolving situation presents, MONUSCO has continued to adjust its deployment and presence to better adapt its footprint to the priorities set out in resolution 2348 (2017), with a view to maximizing its effectiveness in the face of budget cuts. It has modified its sector boundaries to enable the force to redeploy its troops in the eastern provinces and to intervene with more flexibility throughout the country. The Mission has also improved the mobility of the Intervention Brigade and strengthened its presence in the Kasai region, largely through redeployments of civilian, military and police personnel.

In order to respect the ceiling on military personnel numbers authorized under resolution 2348 (2017) and to meet the new budget requirements, the Mission will soon complete the repatriation of 1,687 military units. MONUSCO is also in the process of introducing and testing a new strategy of protection by projection, specifically aimed at areas affected by the closure of MONUSCO bases and designed to provide the mission with greater flexibility in fulfilling its mandate to protect civilians.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize MONUSCO's commitment to supporting, through its good offices, the principles of the Agreement of 31 December 2016, which represent the only viable way to create the necessary conditions for holding credible and peaceful elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Publishing a realistic electoral calendar, establishing a budget for the elections, implementing measures to ease tensions and ensuring respect for fundamental rights and freedoms are the main conditions that must be now be met in order to advance the political process. In that regard, while United Nations support is essential, it is not enough. Regional actors, including the African Union, the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of Central African States, have a key role to play in helping all the stakeholders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to meet the challenges they are facing and in advancing the political process for the holding of elections. In that context, the recent visit of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission represents a significant reinforcement of the international community's collective efforts to help the Democratic Republic of the Congo make progress towards holding elections. Only through joint efforts, in solidarity and synergy, can the obstacles facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo be overcome.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Sidikou for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to start by welcoming the presence of Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also thank Mr. Maman Sidikou, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing, and reiterate

our appreciation for his entire team and the staff of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) for the work they are doing in very difficult conditions.

I would like to once again reaffirm Uruguay's commitment to establishing peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I speak not just as a non-permanent member of the Security Council but also as representative of a country that has been contributing troops to MONUSCO for the past 17 years without interruption. I would like to outline Uruguay's assessment of three aspects of the situation — the accumulating political delays, their impact on the security, humanitarian and human rights situations, and the role of MONUSCO in dealing with the current situation.

First, we are concerned about the fact that the broad consensus reached between the key political actors through the signing on 31 December 2016 of the Comprehensive and Inclusive Political Agreement is rapidly eroding, thanks to significant divisions among the signatories. The continuing delays in the implementation of the Agreement, thanks to the lack of genuine commitment among parties, have seriously jeopardized the possibility of holding elections before the end of the year, as stipulated in the Agreement, and have done nothing but heighten the political and institutional uncertainty. In order to deal with this, Uruguay strongly urges all the political stakeholders who signed the Agreement — including the Government, which has a special role to play by virtue of its sovereign responsibilities — to create the conditions necessary to advance the political process. There is no more time to lose.

Uruguay endorses the repeated requests by the Secretary-General, the Council and the African Union for the speedy publication of a credible calendar for the holding of elections, in accordance with the provisions of the agreement. It would not only significantly reduce uncertainty among the Congolese people but would also enable the various partners — including the United Nations, whose technical and financial support remain important for the conduct of elections — to better determine the type of support they will have to provide.

Secondly, the stagnation of the political process is clearly having a negative effect on the security, humanitarian and human rights situation. It is always the civilian population that suffers most in such crises. As the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/824) points out, the security situation has continued to worsen in many areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the past few months. We also continue to be concerned about the number of human rights abuses and violations documented by MONUSCO, including the continuing shrinking of the democratic space and violations of civil and political rights, especially the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of opinion and expression.

We urge the Government authorities to take decisive action to end impunity. That will involve strong Government measures aimed at bringing to justice any individual responsible for human rights violations, including members of the national police and armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With regard to the militias operating in the country, a truly horrifying video has been circulated recently of a public rape and execution that took place in April in the city of Luebo in Kasai province. While many were responsible, the main perpetrator was Kalamba Kambangoma, the head of the Kamuina Nsapu rebel group. Acts such as these make us reflect and urge that such evidence be brought before the International Criminal Court so that the murderer and his followers can be sentenced as soon as possible. Those realities, exacerbated by a fragile economic situation, have led to a worrying humanitarian situation, with more than 8.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and almost 4 million displaced from their homes. I reiterate once again that those negative trends cannot improve as long as the political actors do not make tangible progress with the political process. Hence the crucial importance of the immediate and full implementation of the Agreement of 31 December 2016.

Thirdly, Uruguay acknowledges the efforts that MONUSCO has continued to make with the goal of turning its force into a more agile, flexible and receptive instrument. However, in that regard I should reiterate my delegation's views as expressed during the renewal of the mandate in March (see S/PV.7910) and the previous briefing session in July (see S/PV.7998). We are concerned about the reduction in MONUSCO troop numbers at a time when there the violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is increasing significantly. We have taken note of the special report (S/2017/826) of the Secretary-General on the recently published strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We acknowledge the

comprehensive and serious work done at the direction of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and it is important to us. We should also emphasize that the Secretariat has already clearly indicated the limits of the tasks that MONUSCO can carry out in its present configuration and given the current situation on the ground. We encourage MONUSCO to continue focusing on the Mission's two strategic priorities, the protection of civilians and support for the implementation of the Agreement of 31 December 2016.

In conclusion, I would like to express our condolences to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the death of two of its Blue Helmets as a result of the deliberate attacks perpetrated by the Allied Democratic Forces armed group. We firmly condemn those attacks and call for those responsible to be brought to justice.

Mr. Zambrana (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to welcome the presence of Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Bolivia is also grateful for the briefing from Mr. Maman Sidikou, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). We thank him for his mediating efforts and his support to the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in strengthening the security and stability in the country.

We deplore the recent attack on MONUSCO by the Allied Democratic Forces, offer our deepest condolences to the families, the people and the Government of Tanzania for their loss of two members of their contingent in that attack and hope that the injured recover swiftly. We condemn the current climate of violence and the deterioration of the security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We regret that the new areas of conflict that have emerged include disputes over access to natural resources, conflicts between armed and intercommunal groups and ethnic violence.

We firmly condemn the actions that have resulted, as Mr. Sidikou mentioned, in approximately 8.5 million people, including 5.5 million children, needing humanitarian assistance. We deplore the fact that 3.8 million people have been internally displaced, an increase of 16 per cent since January, according to the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2017/824). We also condemn all actions aimed at intensifying intercommunal tensions and inciting violence, as well as any acts of sexual exploitation. We believe that all such acts, including those in which the national police have participated, should be duly investigated and the people responsible brought to justice and tried in the appropriate courts.

Bolivia supports the political initiatives and recommendations of the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/825) on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, which seeks, among other things, to have a positive effect on the plans for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as for the repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of the various insurgent groups, both Congolese and foreigners, operating within the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also commend MONUSCO's increased efforts to bring security to civilians, and we encourage it to continue working for peace and stability in the region, in coordination with the military forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in accordance with its mandate.

The current political stalemate and uncertainty about elections are crucial issues that must be resolved if we are to put an end to insecurity in the region. Progress on the political situation is essential, and we reiterate that the principles of preventive diplomacy and good offices aimed at reaching a negotiated political solution that respects the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must not be neglected. In that regard, we note the convening of a forum for reconciliation in the Kasai region in Kananga on 19 September, and we call on the parties to implement the confidence-building measures contained in the political agreement.

In that regard, Bolivia believes that the Comprehensive and Inclusive Political Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo signed on 31 December 2016 between the Government and the opposition represents a solid foundation establishing a road map for organizing presidential elections in accordance with the country's Constitution and resolution 2277 (2016). We believe that the Agreement should be respected and supported by all stakeholders with the aim of holding peaceful, credible, inclusive and timely elections that can lead to a peaceful transfer of power. In that regard, we call on the signatories to

the Agreement to create the conditions that can enable the political process to make progress and materialize.

We also call for the adoption of an agreed-on election calendar to be published by the Independent National Electoral Commission and for the completion of voter registration, in accordance with the Agreement. As updated by 10 September, voter registration had reached 41 million, of which we would like to emphasize that 48 per cent are women. We commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Special Envoy for the the Great Lakes Region and MONUSCO for using their good offices in collaboration with national political stakeholders and Government authorities to encourage implementation of the Agreement.

Strengthening dialogue and cooperation with regional and subregional partners is key to preventing and settling conflicts. We therefore commend the call by the Southern African Development Community for the publication of an elections calendar and by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union for providing the Electoral Commission with the necessary resources to implement the Agreement of 31 December 2016. Bolivia urges them, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Economic Community of Central African States to hold periodic consultations with the United Nations, the African Union and other international stakeholders so as to ensure that the region and the international community support the implementation of that agreement.

Finally, I would like to say that we are firmly believe that it is African initiatives and the Congolese people and their institutions who should make decisions about the future of their country. Our duty is to support those decisions and respect their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. It is our belief that that will be a decisive factor in the promotion of peace and stability and the development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. She Okitundu (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, it is my honour to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October, andhow honoured we are to see France presiding over the deliberations of the Council today. I would also like to thank you sincerely for taking the initiative to organize this meeting on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to assure you of our support and cooperation throughout your mandate.

I would be remiss if I did not once again express my gratitude to the Council, on behalf of the Congolese Government and people, for its remarkable continued efforts to help my country restore much-needed stability and harness the energy it needs for its development. I would also like to welcome and express my esteem for Secretary-General António Guterres for his commitment and personal involvement in the quest for peaceful solutions to the situation in my country.

Before I proceed, on behalf of the Government of my country, I would like to strongly condemn the attacks on peacekeepers perpetrated by the Allied Democratic Forces in North Kivu, which resulted in the death of two Tanzanian Blue Helmets and injured 18 others. My country offers its deepest condolences to the United Nations and the Government of Tanzania, as well as to the victims' families.

My delegation takes note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (S/2017/825) and on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2017/824), issued on 29 September and 2 October respectively, and we thank Mr. Maman Samba Sidikou, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who has just presented them. While we appreciate the reports' content, we believe it is important to clarify a number of points that deserve the Council's attention. In that regard, I would like to say a few words about the political situation in my country, with particular emphasis on the implementation of the Comprehensive and Inclusive Political Agreement of 31 December 2016 and the electoral process, as well as on the security situation and the strategic dialogue.

With regard to the implementation of the Agreement, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report of 15 August 2017 (S/2017/712), following the establishment of a Government of National Unity, the Conseil national de suivi de l'accord was created. It is functioning and is headed by a member of the Rassemblement opposition. I will come back to that in a moment.

With regard to the electoral process, as the Council knows, the process of updating the electoral register has entered its final phase with the enrolment of voters in Kasai and Kasai Central provinces, as well as in the territories of Luilu and Kamiji in Lomami province, all of which have been in turmoil in the wake of the deplorable events involving the Kamuina Nsapu militia. Of 45 million expected voters, 42 million have already been registered. As we can see, my country is well and truly on the road to holding elections. The question that everyone on the Council has asked today is about the electoral calendar. In answer to that, I can say that the Conseil national de suivi de l'accord, together with the Independent National Electoral Commission and the Government, has begun evaluating the electoral process, and that the calendar will be published as soon as that is done. The Council is no doubt aware, however, that the Commission published draft calendars on two previous occasions, in 2014 and 2015, which were not only systematically rejected by the opposition but also did not receive the expected support from the international community. As a result, the elections have been postponed until now.

Moreover, for logistical, financial, security and legal reasons, the President of the Independent National Electoral Commission announced several months ago that the three elections planned for December could not take place at that time. That announcement continues to give rise to differing views on the legitimacy of my country's institutions thereafter. It seems hardly necessary to affirm in that regard that the institutions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, like those of other States around the world, derive their legitimacy from the Constitution. The Comprehensive and Inclusive Political Agreement, signed at Kinshasa's Interdiocesan Centre and based specifically on our desire to organize peaceful, credible and transparent elections, also commits the signatories to respect for the Constitution. Paragraph 2.1 of chapter 2 of the Agreement states that

> "[t]he parties commit to respecting the Constitution of 18 February 2006, as amended in 2011, and the laws of the Republic, and to organize presidential, legislative, national and provincial elections, as well as local elections, in conformity with the Constitution."

As for the possibility of postponing the elections, paragraph 4.2 of chapter 4 of the Agreement states that

> "[t]he parties agree to organize elections in a single presidential, legal, national and provincial sequence in December 2017 at the latest. Nevertheless, the Conseil national de suivi de l'accord, the Government and the Independent National Electoral Commission can unanimously evaluate the timeline required for the finalization of election dates."

A second evaluation meeting is planned for 12 to 14 October 2017 in order to make that decision. To conclude this point, it is important to underscore that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is firmly committed to the irreversibility of organizing the elections, as President Joseph Kabila Kabange stated from the rostrum of the General Assembly Hall (see A/72/PV.19). But we must ensure that they are strong elections that will be conducive to a peaceful transition of power and can avoid the unfortunate turmoil that marked the previous elections, in 2006 and 2011.

On the security front, both reports mention the activities of armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as in certain States of the Great Lakes region. With regard to my country specifically, our armed forces are continuing their fight to eradicate such groups in collaboration with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Given those negative forces' unconventional operating methods, my country is of the view that MONUSCO should aim at maximum effectiveness by providing the Intervention Brigade with the means that can enable it to fulfil the tasks assigned to it under resolution 2348 (2017).

As regards the former combatants of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23), in my statement to the Council in August (see S/PV.8026), I brought members up to date on the political and military activities of those ex-rebels in the neighbouring countries where they had found refuge, a situation that has also been brought to the attention of the authorities of those countries. For that reason, my Government has appealed to the Council to put pressure on the countries involved to comply with their commitments under the Addis Ababa agreement, and that we should also consider imposing sanctions on the former M-23's leaders. The disappearance of more than 900 M-23 members cantoned in the Bihanga military camp is very worrying. According to information from various sources, including the tripartite meeting of the Democratic Republic of the

Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan in Kinshasa from 2 to 4 September, they will be joining various armed groups operating in the Central African Republic, Burundi and South Sudan as well as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Council will agree that this development could harm peace and stability in the entire region.

With regard to these issues, President Kabange and his Ugandan counterpart, President Yoweri Museveni, decided at their most recent meeting to coordinate their efforts to eradicate negative forces in the region and to launch joint operations shortly. The report also mentions the possibility of Uganda's granting refugee status to these former rebels, a possibility that my country will verify through the appropriate channels before discussing it with the Ugandan Government. If the persons concerned meet the requirements of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the decision of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees will be final.

In my various statements I have always brought up the issue of the 340 combatants of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda who are still waiting to be repatriated in transit sites in Kanyabayonga in North Kivu, Walungu in South Kivu and Kisangani in Tshopo. I once again reiterate my Government's call to the international community to repatriate them to their countries of origin or, failing that, to a third-party country outside the Great Lakes region.

Concerning the combatants of the Sudan People's Liberation Army quartered in Munigi, Dungu and Goma in North Kivu, my Government appreciates the efforts made in that regard by MONUSCO in collaboration with the Governments of South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Those efforts have resulted in the repatriation of eight of them and the relocation of 58 others to Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan. My Government hopes that those efforts will continue until all those still in the transit sites are either repatriated or relocated to third-party countries.

To bring this chapter to a close, I should briefly mention that calm returned yesterday to the provinces of Kasai and Kasai Central, which suffered terrorist attacks by the Kamuina Nsapu militia. Investigations have been opened to shed light on the exact circumstances of the crimes committed, establish accountability for them and identify their perpetrators with a view to punishing them. The local population, which had sought refuge in neighbouring provinces and in Angola, is beginning to return. In order to restore their confidence and promote peaceful coexistence, the President of the Republic, at the end of his visit to the provinces concerned with the purpose of reassuring the people, initiated and presided over a forum on peace, reconciliation and development, involving all the stakeholders in those provinces.

As I emphasized to the Council two months ago, the major remaining challenge in that part of the country is a humanitarian one. Caring for the internally and externally displaced persons who are returning demands that we mobilize all our partners for urgent assistance.

With regard to the strategic dialogue — beyond the first phase, which was held in March 2016 — resolution 2348 (2017) provides for the dialogue between the Government and MONUSCO to continue. In that regard, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo believes that the withdrawal of the United Nations forces should be carried out gradually in three phases. The first should be carried out in areas where MONUSCO's presence is no longer necessary, the second in areas where the concentration of forces is greater than the threat, and the third in the areas where threats persist or new challenges are emerging. With regard to the composition of MONUSCO's contingents, we believe that the Intervention Brigade should be the last force to leave the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, given the nature of its actions and its origin.

This morning I have heard concern and even uncertainty from members of the Council regarding the implementation of the Agreement and the organization of the elections. I will try to put that into perspective. The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is no worse than in other countries in similar circumstances. With regard, first, to the comments about the disproportionate use of force, there is absolutely no deliberate policy for using disproportionate force. If such cases occur, it is individuals who are responsible, and those individuals would be punished and condemned. With regard to freedom of expression and the freedom to demonstrate, I would like to remind the Council that we are bound by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which cannot be broken — its freedoms are absolute, but their interpretation can be relative. Restrictions do exist, but such restrictions are necessary in all democratic societies. In our country, an instance of people inciting to insurrection through a demonstration clearly does not fall within the context

of the democratic exercise of the freedom of expression. Public order requires and takes precedence over the exercise of that freedom.

That is why I would like to assure the Council of the determination of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to see the Agreement of 31 December implemented, which it is doing, despite all the concerns I have heard today.

As far as the organization of elections is concerned, the main condition for getting that done is determining who the electors are. And as I said earlier, the voter registration process will be finalized in around 30 days. After that, and as the Independent National Electoral Commission has promised, the electoral calendar will be published, and we will know when the elections are to take place. I wanted to put the concerns that I have just heard into perspective.

In its quest to achieve peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my Government appreciates the support that it has received from international and regional organizations, including the African Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa, the Southern African Development Community and many others. This is an opportunity for my country to pay tribute and express our gratitude to them, as well as to the troop-contributing countries. I would like to reiterate the gratitude of my Government to all members of the Council for their commitment to the cause of peace in my country.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8068

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8068th meeting
Thursday, 12 October 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Delattre/Mrs. Gueguen	(France)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Zambrana
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skau
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2017/840)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2017/840)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Sandra Honoré Braithwaite, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. João Pedro Vale de Almeida, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/840, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

I now give the floor to Ms. Honoré Braithwaite.

Ms. Honoré Braithwaite (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank France for convening today's meeting on the situation in Haiti in its capacity as President of the Security Council,

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the presence in the Council of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Haiti.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to thank all Council members for their unwavering support to Haiti's stabilization process and the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) since the Mission's establishment by resolution 1542 (2004), adopted in April 2004.

When MINUSTAH was established, Haiti was in a profound state of instability and widespread political violence, and a climate of lawlessness and impunity had affected the everyday life of millions of Haitians. State authority was weak and limited to parts of the capital, Port-au-Prince, with the three branches of power either non-functional or non-existent and a national police that was overwhelmed by the multiple threats to public order and the rule of law.

Today, 13 and a half years later, on the eve of MINUSTAH's closure and transition to a smaller peacekeeping Mission, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), on 15 October, Haiti has a very different outlook, despite the many challenges still facing the country. The Haitian people enjoy a considerable degree of security and greater stability; political violence has diminished considerably; and armed gangs no longer hold the population hostage, also thanks to the work of the National Police, now 14,000 strong, which has grown significantly in numbers and capacity. All three branches of power are in place, with the executive and legislative branches restored to full functioning, while the Superior Council of the Judiciary, created for the first time in 2012, remains in need of long-term fixes to allow it to fully play its role as the guardian of an independent and impartial judicial system.

These democratic institutions are complemented by the directly elected officials now in place at all levels of governance, for the first time in 10 years, denoting real progress in the implementation of the constitutional governance system. At the heart of these achievements stood the creation of stable political conditions, without which none of the aforementioned would have been possible.

There is no doubt that those achievements, and many others that I have not mentioned, while significant, are only initial steps. Tireless efforts will be required not only by the Haitian authorities but by all Haitian actors to consolidate these gains, ensure continued political stability, sustain and reinforce the functioning of the democratic institutions and further improve their delivery in the interest of the Haitian people, with the continued support of Haiti's international friends and partners.

It is against this background that I am encouraged by the overall direction that the current Administration has adopted. President Jovenel Moise has reiterated his determination to transform and modernize the State to better serve the people and has taken initial steps to translate this overarching objective into deliverables, especially through the launch and expansion of the Government's flagship development programme, the Caravan of Change, which aims to enhance State delivery and revitalize the economy by increasing agricultural production and improving living conditions, especially in rural areas. In the same spirit, since his inauguration, the President has initiated steps towards financial austerity, spoken out against corruption and presented the contours of an institutional reform agenda aimed at enhancing political stability, while outlining ideas for a nationwide dialogue on Haiti's future.

Immediate improvements, however, have yet to be felt by the vast majority of the population, particularly in poor urban areas, and the political situation remains fragile. A little more than eight months into the presidential term, the widely contested 2017/2018 budget, stalled indirect elections and disagreements over the re-establishment of the armed forces, coupled with the known weaknesses in State institutions, as well as the absence of significant improvement in the difficult living conditions of much of the population, have reopened some divisions between the executive and some segments of the political opposition.

The reform agenda presented by the Government and its continued collaborative relations with the Legislature, which are necessary for the adoption of a package of key legislation, are promising signs for further progress. However, amid a climate of widespread economic grievances and strained relations between the executive branch and the political opposition, the maintenance of stability in the longer run may depend on the ability and commitment of the Administration to move more swiftly in undertaking concrete action and implementing the promised reforms on the basis of dialogue with different sectors of society and under a unified national vision.

In this context, and with a view to consolidating political stability, a steady pace of concrete steps towards a broad institutional reform process is key. Such a reform process has to aim at the strengthening of the country's democratic structures and should be based on a dialogue that adds the voices of other national sectors, including political parties, both pro-Government and opposition. But these voices also need to be open to political consensus, which is vital for any reform process.

I am convinced that the country can still make full use of the current window of opportunity created by the stabilization efforts of the past decade, including with the support provided through MINUSTAH and the near-completion of the 2015-2017 electoral process. It is, however, of utmost importance that the divisions that have re-emerged be addressed so as to prevent any relapse into political instability. The most urgent task confronting Haiti today consists of ensuring the conditions for continued stability, thereby enabling long-term socioeconomic development. It would be difficult to meet these conditions without the rule of law and human rights for all Haitian citizens; without a fully functioning and independent judiciary and a non-politicized Haitian National Police; and without the independent management of other governance institutions provided for by the Constitution, including a Constitutional Council, a Permanent Electoral Council and councils established through indirect elections, from which all Haitians can benefit.

MINUJUSTH becomes operational four days from now and stands ready to play an effective role, alongside the United Nations country team, in supporting the consolidation of the country's stability, including through support for the implementation of institutional reforms to bolster the rule of law and human rights and enhance governance. I trust that, as was the case for MINUSTAH, the Haitian people and Government will extend their cooperation and partnership to MINUJUSTH in the next two years. The timely adoption of a legal framework regulating MINUJUSTH's status will be an important step in that regard. The coordinated support that the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes can provide, alongside the Special Envoy for Haiti, appointed by the Secretary-General on 20 June to assist Haiti in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including in the area of health, as well as in water and sanitation, to eliminate the transmission of cholera, will also be key in supporting the country on its path towards sustainable development. The United Nations will continue to make every effort to assist the Government in alleviating the suffering caused by the cholera epidemic.

This being my last meeting as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSTAH, please allow me to thank the Secretary-General for the

trust that he placed in me, and the Security Council and all Member States and international partners, including police- and troop-contributing countries, the Group of Friends, and the diplomatic corps and the Core Group on Haiti, for the guidance and support that they have provided throughout my tenure and that of my predecessors.

The achievements of the United Nations in Haiti would not have been possible without my colleagues in MINUSTAH and in the United Nations country team. I am deeply indebted to them and thank them for their dedication to the work in Haiti, their robust counsel and genuine commitment. It has been an honour to serve under the flag of the United Nations and to support Haiti and the Haitian people in the creation of conditions that have ultimately allowed the Council to decide on the closure on 15 October of MINUSTAH and on the transition to MINUJUSTH.

(*spoke in French*)

My most heartfelt thanks go to the Haitian people and Government for their continued cooperation and confidence. It has been an honour to support this beautiful country and its entire population in the fully Haitian process of consolidating peace and democracy.

(*spoke in English*)

Looking ahead, I have no doubt that, under the leadership of the Haitian authorities and guided by the aspirations of the Haitian people for political stability, the rule of law and prosperity, the continued partnership between Haiti, the international community and the United Nations will contribute to the sustainability of the progress achieved during the past 13 years in Haiti's stabilization and democratization process.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Sandra Honoré Braithwaite for her briefing and would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for her exemplary commitment and the quality of her work and that of her entire team in the service of peace and stability in Haiti.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I would like to welcome Ambassador Régis and Special Representative Honoré to the Council today.

Back in April, the Security Council voted unanimously to withdraw the military component of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). The Mission had been deployed since 2004, and the vote reflected our recognition of the progress Haiti had made towards stabilization and a return to democratic order. This week marks a turning point. MINUSTAH is winding down. In just a few days a new Mission, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), will launch, devoting its efforts where they are most needed — supporting the rule of law, contributing to the continuing development of the Haitian National Police and protecting human rights.

We believe the transition sets a strong example of how United Nations peacekeeping missions can and should change as a political situation evolves. The new Mission embodies the core principles of success that we have developed as part of our peacekeeping review, including making sure that the Mission's mandated tasks and overall concept are consistent with the political realities on the ground. We believe that MINUJUSTH's staffing, including formed police units, individual police officers and corrections officers, as well as civilian experts in the rule of law, human rights, political affairs, gender, conduct and discipline and other key areas, will contribute significantly to the justice-sector priorities that the international community and the Government of Haiti have identified. The mentoring and advising by the United Nations of the Haitian National Police will continue to be a key factor in the Haitian National Police's ability to ensure public order and provide security for the Haitian people. MINUJUSTH's focus on addressing pretrial detention and other corrections-related issues will also be important.

When peacekeeping works well we see countries develop their own capacities to protect their citizens and we see countries re-establish domestic political processes. MINUSTAH has contributed to both those goals in Haiti, and for that we salute the leadership of Special Representative Honoré, who has served in Port-au-Prince since 2013. We know that the Secretary-General's next Special Representative will be just as committed to working closely with the Government of Haiti and the Haitian people to achieve the important mandate of the MINUJUSTH successor Mission. I would also like to take a moment to recognize the troop- and police-contributing countries and the thousands of men and women who have served in MINUSTAH over the years for their commitment to the Mission.

Finally, the support of MINUSTAH to the Government and the people of Haiti has resulted in the strengthening of State institutions — and their establishment, in some cases — that are key to ensuring the conduct of Haiti's constitutional and political processes. Haiti's security, political and development agenda can be shaped only by Haitians themselves. It will therefore be critical to ensure that Haiti takes this window of opportunity to advance dialogue on the additional measures and reforms required to consolidate the security and stabilization gains of the past few years in order to strengthen its institutions so that they can continue to meet the people's needs.

Together with the international community, the United States looks forward to maintaining its close partnership with the Haitian Government and people in order to ensure the country's continued stability, democratic development and future prosperity.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ms. Sandra Honoré for her briefing and for her commitment all these years as Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). That has been one of the keys to the Mission's success, and we should acknowledge it. I would also like to welcome the Permanent Representative of Haiti to the United Nations.

Italy associates itself with the statement to be delivered later by the observer of the European Union.

The Security Council took the decision to initiate a transition from MINUSTAH to the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), which is focused on Haiti's current needs — strengthening the Haitian National Police, justice and the rule of law, and promoting and defending human rights. The Council's decision reflects the historical changes that have occurred in Haiti with the re-establishment of constitutional order, the revitalization of the National Assembly and the Council's confidence in the new Government's programme. This progress paves the way for the consolidation of a stable democracy that can meet the major challenges that the country is facing. We urge Haiti not to lose this window of opportunity to launch the reforms it will need to take its future into its own hands.

What needs to be done now is to establish a vision for a shared effort and put it into action, a vision based on accessible, fair justice for everyone, a functional electoral system and a firmly established rule of law that ensures that all can enjoy their fundamental rights and have equitable access to development. We urge the authorities to engage in an inclusive national dialogue with all sectors of Haitian society with a view to restoring their full trust in the country's institutions and engaging them in the reform process. In that regard, women's participation in the country's political, social and economic life must be assured. We encourage the Government to take specific measures to develop and increase their role.

The maintenance of security is a fundamental precondition for the implementation of this process. The enormous progress made by the Haitian National Police, with MINUSTAH's help, represents an essential starting point, but its strengthening and professionalization, and the resources that entails, must now be a top priority. These are objectives that are at the core of MINUJUSTH's assistance mandate, but the primary responsibility for them rests with the Haitian authorities. In that regard, Haiti is on the way to becoming a model for future action by the Council on issues of transition and stabilization by strengthening the elements of peacekeeping missions related to training and organizing police forces, with the goal of building and consolidating national capacities for maintaining peace and preventing conflict.

We believe that national ownership is essential to every peace and stabilization effort, and Haiti is no exception. We believe firmly that with the tools made available to it by the Council, Haiti will be able to move gradually towards a full transfer of powers to the Haitian authorities. There will also have to be an open dialogue and close cooperation with MINUJUSTH, and we urge MINUJUSTH, when it is implementing its mandate, to use its political influence and good offices to the maximum as it implements its mandate. In that regard, we look forward to seeing a Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of Mission appointed as soon as possible.

Since it is very important to ensure a responsible transition, we would like to emphasize the role that the United Nations will continue to play in assisting the country. We reiterate our thanks to MINUSTAH for its vital contribution to maintaining law and order and for intervening at critical and urgent times in the country over the years.

We appreciate the integrated planning efforts of the Mission and the country team and encourage them to continue to implement those plans so that MINUJUSTH can be operational from the beginning of its mandate. The United Nations on the ground must continue to act in a coordinated, cohesive manner with the goal of transitioning from emergency assistance to the long-term development of the country. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Italy's commitment to Haiti, which we have affirmed through our support to the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund and to Special Envoy Josette Sheeran, who has been appointed to implement the new strategy for eradicating the epidemic.

Mr. Zambrana (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Sandra Honoré, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for her informative briefing on the latest developments in the Republic of Haiti and the activities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to her and her whole team for her work as Head of the Mission. We would also like to thank the representative of Haiti for his presence here today.

I would first like to congratulate MINUSTAH on its work throughout the 13 years of its deployment. We appreciate its efforts to lay the groundwork for lasting stability and a better future for Haiti, and for establishing priorities aimed at ensuring a successful transition and an assessment of its work so that its progress to date can be reviewed, as the Secretary-General's latest report clearly reflects (S/2017/840). We also congratulate MINUSTAH's troops on their performance. I should note that Bolivia took part in this Mission and did so with professionalism, dedication and the gratitude of the Haitian people, which we are proud of.

Bolivia reaffirms its commitment to the present and future of the Republic of Haiti. We believe that the international community should be united in working together to support the country's economic and social development, bearing in mind the new challenges that the new United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) will encounter in the security and rule-of-law sectors. That support must be given in consultation and coordination with the Haitian Government. In that regard, Bolivia supports Haiti's wish to switch the basis of the new Mission's mandate to Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations rather than Chapter VII, as it is currently. The mandate should also be reviewed in the light of the results and information that the Council obtained during its most recent visit to Haiti, which should serve as input for the new Mission so that when its mandate is renewed, it will be easier to understand, clearer and more specific. It should particularly be borne in mind that the Mission will be expected to accomplish a number of tasks and strategic goals over a period of two years.

However, the transition should not be a reason to disregard some fundamental and as yet unresolved issues such as those of sexual exploitation and abuse, and cholera. In that regard, we believe that the United Nations bears some responsibility towards the cholera victims in Haiti, as we have reiterated at every Council meeting on the subject of the Council and as the Special Representative mentions in paragraph 52 of the latest report. We welcome the commitment to dealing with this crisis through the Secretary-General's new approach to the fight against cholera. The victims of cholera, which has led to the deaths of some 9,600 people since 2010, should be compensated. During the Council's visit to Haiti, the people we spoke to saw this as a key topic, given the damage that the cholera crisis did to the reputation of United Nations peacekeeping operations in Haiti. It is clear that a failure on the part of the international community to meet its obligations under the new approach will significantly affect the new Mission's credibility and effectiveness. It will be important for MINUJUSTH to work on a new plan of action in that regard.

We would also like to reiterate that it is also the obligation of the international community to support the Republic of Haiti in building robust water-supply, sanitation and health-care systems in order to end the cholera crisis. We call on the Members of the United Nations as a whole to support the Secretary-General's new approach and General Assembly resolution 71/161B, adopted on 13 July, which established a trust fund for that purpose, and encourage Security Council members and all States Members of the United Nations to consolidate the fund.

With regard to sexual abuse and exploitation, we take note of the Special Representative's commitment to supporting the victims through a trust fund and to appoint a special defender in such cases. We believe those efforts should continue on the principle of zero tolerance and that those responsible for sexual abuse and exploitation should be punished. We should not

omit to express our concern about the problem of children who are fatherless as a result of sexual abuse.

Concerning the Government of Haiti's progress on the political front, we commend the designation of members for 140 municipal assemblies. We urge it to appoint a replacement for the Ombudsman and to continue to strengthen Haitian institutions in order to ensure the rule of law and firm up the foundations that will enable it to achieve greater political and social cohesion and to tackle the country's current socioeconomic and development challenges. We also welcome the Government's work in establishing a permanent Electoral Council, calling on candidates for the Superior Council of the Judiciary, inviting the opposition parties to dialogue in order to discuss ways of improving the functioning of political parties and working on a road map for the security, justice, energy, education, health and farming sectors. Those advances clearly demonstrates the Government's commitment to democracy and stability, as does the progress on the Caravan of Change and the joint legislative agenda. We also commend the progress that has been made in the security sector, particularly the growing capacity of the Haitian National Police and its infrastructure. We will continue to encourage efforts in that area with a view to achieving the goals of its 2017-2021 strategic development plan

In conclusion, Bolivia recognizes the national ownership and primary responsibility of the Government and the people of Haiti for all aspects of their country's development, and encourages MINUJUSTH to coordinate with the Government in providing it with logistical and technical experience while respecting its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Special Representative Honoré for her briefing. As the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) draws to a close after 13 years in Haiti, I would like to join others in thanking her for her dedicated service. I also want to pay tribute to all who have been involved with the Mission and its work — the civilian staff, troops and police who have served in it and in particular the 186 men and women who have died in MINUSTAH's service.

When we compare Haiti today to the Haiti of 2004, MINUSTAH's legacy is clear. There is less violence, the security environment is more stable, the Haitian National Police is more effective and a more democratic political culture has emerged, accompanied by transitions of power. Of course, we cannot be complacent. The gains made must be protected. The United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) represents a transitional stage for future United Nations support for Haiti. The Haiti of today still needs help to ensure that its police will soon be able stand alone, that justice institutions will soon function effectively and that human rights are afforded the protection and priority they require.

While we note that a status of forces agreement has not yet been signed and urge the Government to do so as soon as possible, we are nevertheless pleased that the transition to MINUJUSTH is on track. We must ensure that the Mission has access to the most appropriate personnel and equipment and that this is underpinned by high-quality training, skilled, robust leadership and clear accountability for underperformance and misconduct. If the United Nations is to maximize the impact of its support to Haiti, MINUJUSTH must work closely with the United Nations country team, which has a critical role to play in sustaining peace. For example, through its support for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations country team will be able to bring a long-term developmental focus to the major challenges that Haiti faces today. Joint planning, analysis and capacity-mapping exercises will be needed from day one so that responsibilities are handed over sequentially well ahead of MINUJUSTH's closure. Indeed, Haiti does not need an indefinite peacekeeping operation. The planned exit strategy to guide a two-year transition from MINUJUSTH to the United Nations country team and also, critically, Haiti's own national institutions marks an opportunity for the United Nations to set precedents for peacekeeping missions around the world.

We regret that the good work of MINUSTAH was tainted by the spectre of cholera and sexual exploitation and abuse. Here, too, there are lessons to be learned. The new approach to cholera has helped to put Haiti on a path towards eradication, but this came too long after the damage had been done. As for sexual exploitation at the hands of peacekeepers, Haiti's tragic experience demonstrates why we cannot tolerate any backsliding on the commitments made through resolution 2272 (2016).

There is much that the United Nations can do better. But the single most important guarantor of the progress achieved in Haiti lies with its own leadership. The gap

left by MINUSTAH is not primarily for MINUJUSTH to plug but for Haiti's Government, politicians and institutions to begin to fill. For example, security cannot be achieved unless the Government protects the independence of Haiti's police and gives them the resources they need rather than diverting money towards the creation of new armed forces. Justice cannot be delivered until parliamentarians pass legislation critical to empowering the judiciary. Human rights cannot be protected without proper institutionalization within the State, and pronouncements of progress will continue to ring hollow until we see more women empowered as political leaders and fewer becoming victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

In conclusion, today we are all witnessing Haiti turn a corner. Days of violence and instability have begun to fade. The ultimate thanks go to the people of Haiti. Without question, they have displayed remarkable resilience. But the courageous efforts of MINUSTAH have also played their part. We salute their successes and look forward to continued assistance by the United Nations to the Haitian people.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report of 5 October on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) (S/2017/840) and the Special Representative, Ms. Sandra Honoré, for her briefing.

Uruguay associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Peru on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti.

As we are only three days away from the closure of MINUSTAH, I would like to thank all those who in one way or other have participated in the Mission. Men and women of various nationalities, military and police officers as well as civilians have since 2004 all been serving the same cause: that of bringing peace and stability to the people of Haiti. Many of them have done this at the risk of their own lives. We remember all of them without exception and pay them heartfelt tribute. We regularly refer to them — from Special Representative of the Secretary-General Representative Hédi Annabi to Principal Deputy Representative Luiz Carlos da Costa and the dozens of other members of the Mission — but very rarely give their names.

Today I would like to mention by name the eight Uruguayans who lost their lives serving in Haiti: Corporal Leandro Acosta, Air Force Captain José Ignacio Larrosa, First Lieutenant Santiago Hernández, aviation engineers José Pastor, Enrique Montiel, Néstor Morales and Gigi Medina, and Lieutenant Colonel Gonzalo Martinere.

I would also like to express my most sincere thanks to Ms. Honoré for her leadership as Head of MINUSTAH and for her outstanding and tireless efforts to bring about stability in Haiti, thanks that I wish to extend to all those who preceded her in that post.

The closure of MINUSTAH provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the manner in which it was managed. As with all human endeavours, there have been positives and negatives. In the 13 years since 2004, MINUSTAH helped to ensure the conditions necessary to enable Haiti to return to democracy; addressed the difficult humanitarian situations brought on by natural disasters; worked with the Government to strengthen its institutions; and helped to strengthen and professionalize the Haitian National Police and to restore and maintain the rule of law, including through the promotion and protection of human rights. Uruguay participated in these efforts from the outset, in 2004, up until 15 April, the date on which its troops ceased operations.

Today we can see the results of this joint effort, as MINUSTAH is leaving the country in a much better condition than it was when the Mission arrived. We can say, therefore, that the balance sheet is a positive one and that the people and the Government of Haiti have benefited from the presence of MINUSTAH over these 13 years.

However, we would have liked the current situation in the country to be more encouraging. Despite the efforts made by the Haitian authorities to consolidate democracy and stability in the country; despite the commitment of President Jovenel Moise to making progress in priority areas, as reflected in his Caravan of Change initiative; and notwithstanding the progress made in increasing the capacity and enhancing the professionalism of the Haitian National Police, a number of areas of concern remain.

The socioeconomic situation in the country continues to be fragile, and the population remains vulnerable. Progress in the areas of the rule of law and human rights is very slow. In the judicial field, progress has been limited. We continue to see long-term preventive detentions, and the prisons are overcrowded. The level of the protection and promotion of the human rights of women is far from satisfactory. Transparency

International's 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index places Haiti 159th of the 176 countries on the list.

Despite the progress that has been made in fighting the cholera epidemic, cholera-related deaths continue, and the percentage of the population with access to drinking water and sanitation systems remains very low.

We share the concern of various sectors of Haitian society — parliamentarians, leaders of political parties, defenders of human rights and security experts — about the process of remobilizing the armed forces. We believe that Haiti should concentrate all of its efforts and resources on areas of priority development and on those initiatives that will generate direct benefits for the Haitian population and strengthen the institutional structure of the country.

We cannot overlook the expenses involved in the return of the armed forces in terms of investment and operational costs, at a time when the country has so many pressing needs and the risk of external aggression seems low.

We believe that efforts should be focused on continuing to strengthen and train the Haitian National Police, so that it is able to fully meet its commitment to ensure national security. National and international efforts have so far been geared to this end, and this is how we should continue in future, so as not to jeopardize the achievements made in the area of security in the 13 years of MINUSTAH's presence.

We are pleased that, with the help of MINUSTAH, the Haitian National Police has continued to build its capacity to ensure public order and provide security to the population and that the security situation in the country is relatively stable and has not been affected by the withdrawal of MINUSTAH.

We believe that Haiti still needs the support and assistance of the United Nations and the international community. However, we also believe that those efforts should focus on areas that are key to strengthening the country's institutions, so that Haiti can make progress on the road to development and prosperity and leave behind its need for constant assistance, which tends to perpetuate itself. In that regard, we believe that the role of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) will be essential. With the joint transition plan of MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team, MINUJUSTH should be able to help the Government strengthen its rule-of-law institutions while continuing to provide support to the Haitian National Police and promote the development of law enforcement. It should also participate in monitoring, reporting on and analysing the human rights situation, in accordance with its mandate. For that it will need to count on firm political will and a commitment to action on the part of the Haitian authorities. We hope that will be the case to the benefit of the people of Haiti, who deserve that commitment from their leadership.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Sandra Honoré for her briefing. I would also like to express our deep gratitude to her and her team and, through her, to all the personnel of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), whose mandate is ending in a few days. I especially thank the United Nations troops who have made great sacrifices to achieve security and stability in Haiti.

Egypt welcomes the progress that Haiti has made in the past year on both the political and security fronts, and the relative stability that has been achieved despite all Haiti's challenges. International support, provided mainly by the United Nations, has played a vital role in achieving stability in Haiti, and it is therefore incumbent on us to continue to provide support in the next phase so as to build and sustain peace, as the representative of the United Kingdom has said. Since the new United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) will start its work in the next few days, I would like to stress the following points.

First, MINUJUSTH should focus on building national institutions, especially rule-of-law institutions and the national police, in accordance with the country's needs and requirements. It should not use its resources for non-traditional or controversial tasks. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the work that has been done to develop the National Police, as well as President Moise's efforts to build a national army.

Secondly, we call for enhanced coordination between MINUJUSTH and the United Nations country team, which will help to ensure that United Nations resources are used as efficiently as possible. It will be important to develop the country team's collective capabilities so that it will be able to meet the requirements of the next phase, including realizing national development plans in the areas of infrastructure, health and education and providing related training, as well as improving legislation with a view to attracting domestic and

foreign private-sector investment, especially in the areas of agriculture and tourism. In that regard, we would like to propose that the Government of Haiti consider forming a partnership with the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission with the aim of facilitating comprehensive and integrated support to Haiti on the political, development and social fronts while ensuring national ownership. We should build an international forum that enables Haiti to engage with its international partners and follow up on progress at the international level on building and sustaining peace.

Thirdly, the United Nations has a moral and a legal responsibility to support the efforts of the Haitian authorities to combat the cholera epidemic. Both MINUJUSTH and the United Nations country team must therefore have the necessary capacity to support the fight against the cholera epidemic. My delegation welcomes and supports the three-dimensional strategy developed by United Nations Special Envoy Josette Sheeran and discussed in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/840). We also welcome the efforts to combat sexual exploitation and abuse, which have resulted in a decrease in such crimes, as well as the Secretary-General's efforts to apply a zero-tolerance policy to such crimes at every level of the United Nations. We also call for continued investigation of crimes committed in the past in Haiti, with a view to fighting impunity.

Fourthly, on 29 August, during Egypt's presidency, the Security Council held an open debate (see S/PV.8033) that addressed the importance of reviewing peacekeeping operations and enhancing peacekeeping missions' performance. To that end, I urge the Council to identify the lessons learned from MINUSTAH and determine the factors that ensured the Mission's success. It will also be important to monitor the transition from MINUSTAH to MINUJUSTH. That will enable the Council to refer to lessons learned in similar cases when missions' mandates are about to end.

The peacekeeping phase in Haiti is nearing its end. The efforts of the international community and the United Nations should now focus on building and sustaining peace during Haiti's next phase, especially since the country has a clear national vision of priorities that requires support and coordination among the various components of those efforts.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I would like to thank Ms. Sandra Honoré, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for her comprehensive briefing. As the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) approaches its end, we salute her invaluable role in bringing stability to Haiti and acknowledge our deep appreciation to her, the entire MINUSTAH team and the troop- and police-contributing countries for successfully completing such a long and challenging mission.

Kazakhstan recognizes the significant contributions that MINUSTAH and other United Nations institutions have made in Haiti in the past several years to the effort to achieve stabilization, promote the rule of law, ensure good governance and support the local judiciary and law enforcement. MINUSTAH has been particularly instrumental in creating a secure and stable environment, participating in the reconstruction efforts after the 2010 earthquake and supporting Haitian authorities with reforms and institutional development.

We welcome the positive steps taken by the Haitian Government towards restoring democratic institutions and establishing economic recovery, which has focused on agriculture, infrastructure and human capital. Kazakhstan believes that President Moise and his Government will be able to overcome their current challenges and ensure stability and constitutional order, as well as complying with Haiti's international obligations. We fully agree with the observation in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2017/840) that it is critical to ensure that Haiti makes full use of the window of opportunity created by the current relative stability to advance dialogue, with a view to consolidating the security and stabilization gains that have been made over the past few years, making for greater social and political cohesion and reinforcing State institutions so that they can meet the needs of the Haitian people. As Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, outlined during the Council's meeting on peacekeeping reforms on 20 September (see S/PV.8051), our country fully supports the shift from conflict resolution to prevention and sustaining peace, together with structural changes and the new configuration of United Nations entities.

The United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) is supposed to be a role model for future missions, with a particular focus on the nexus of security and development. With a view to consolidating security and stability, MINUJUSTH

should focus on building the capacities of the Haitian National Police, making serious efforts to combat impunity, ensuring the independence of the judiciary and establishing a transparent and efficient prison system. We urge the Government of Haiti to make sure that the Haitian National Police's strategic development plan is implemented rapidly and effectively, with help provided as required by the international community in order to ensure professional training and experience.

The human rights situation should be closely monitored. Given the unfortunate experience of misconduct in MINUSTAH, MINUJUSTH must be held accountable to the highest standards of integrity and discipline. The zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse must be strictly enforced. It is also essential for MINUJUSTH that the United Nations country team work in a coordinated manner with the entire United Nations system, breaking down silos in order to achieve optimal results for sustainable development in Haiti. It also means that the Mission must collaborate closely with neighbouring countries and regional partners, which have made commendable contributions to investment in Haiti. There must be coordination between the various actors and international organizations, the private sector and civil society, and women and young people should be fully engaged.

Kazakhstan has already been an integral part of the international support to Haiti, making contributions to humanitarian efforts to support emergency relief and development activities following the devastating earthquake in 2010. In 2016, Kazakhstan supported the World's Innovation Pole of the Greater North of Haiti, which is aimed at establishing the infrastructure for a knowledge-based economy in Haiti. As the only Central Asian country accredited by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), we have supported two regional CARICOM projects, aimed respectively at developing water resource management in the region and institutional support for the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of CARICOM member States, including Haiti.

The issue of cholera in Haiti should remain a priority for the entire United Nations community in the coming months. Kazakhstan joins the Secretary-General's call to the international community and donors for voluntary contributions to the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund, as envisioned in General Assembly resolution 71/161.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Kazakhstan's firm commitment to supporting Haiti's efforts to achieve peace, progress and prosperity.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Sandra Honoré, for her briefing. The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) will officially conclude its mission and be superseded by the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), thereby ushering in a new era in Haiti.

Since 2004, MINUSTAH, in the face of an earthquake, hurricanes and other hardships, has played an important role in promoting the stability and development of Haiti. More than 100 United Nations peacekeepers, including eight from China, have made the ultimate sacrifice in Haiti, and China commends and pays tribute to MINUSTAH, Special Representative Honoré and all the former Heads of the Mission for their invaluable contributions. MINUSTAH's orderly withdrawal has helped maintain a stable situation in Haiti, creating conditions conducive to MINUJUSTH's smooth deployment. China looks to MINUJUSTH, the United Nations country team and other entities to strengthen their coordination and consolidate the progress achieved by MINUSTAH, thereby making an even greater contribution to Haiti's overall stability and development.

MINUJUSTH cannot stay in Haiti indefinitely. The final solution to the question of Haiti will hinge on the efforts of the Haitian Government. Along with other relevant parties, the Government should work diligently to take on the responsibility of maintaining the country's stability and development of the country. This will entail enhancing its self-development capacities, reinforcing the rule of law, conducting constructive national dialogue, implementing the strategic development plan of the National Police for 2017-2021, ensuring stable funding and working to ensure security in the country as a whole as quickly as possible.

The humanitarian situation in Haiti remains grim. China hopes that the international community will increase its assistance so as to help Haiti eliminate cholera, improve its capabilities in food security and disaster reduction and prevention, and help provide more support to Haiti in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): I would like to thank Ms. Sandra Honoré, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for her comprehensive wrap-up briefing on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), whose mandate will successfully conclude next Sunday. Japan welcomes the outline of MINUSTAH's achievements in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2017/840) and pays tribute to Special Representative Honoré, her predecessors, their teams, the Secretariat and, particularly, the troop- and police-contributing countries for their tireless support to Haiti over the past 13 years.

Japan's participation in MINUSTAH was also an important step in its history of contributing to United Nations peacekeeping.

We deployed approximately 2,200 Self-Defence Forces personnel to the Mission beginning in 2010 to support reconstruction following the earthquake. Those efforts included training Haitians in the use of heavy machinery, as well as technology transfer. I was particularly encouraged by a report that I received from a staff member who joined the Mission and provided training to young Haitians in the operation of the heavy machinery. In it, he wrote that the most memorable moment for him was when the young Haitian trainees expressed their joy with every part of their body on the day they passed the qualifying exams for their operating licenses. We have been encouraged by the Haitian display of ownership in rebuilding their country based on that report. Japan is proud of its Self-Defence Forces' success in helping lay the groundwork for stability, and we have built on those experiences during subsequent deployments.

Japan welcomes the continued implementation of the joint MINUSTAH-United Nations country team transition plan, as well as the progress in efforts to ensure that the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) will be operational on the first day. We join the Secretary-General in calling on the Government to sign the status-of-forces agreement by 16 October. We look forward to working with MINUJUSTH and the Government to strengthen the rule of law and institutions, and further advance the development and professionalization of Haiti's police in line with the 2017-2021 strategic development plan. Haiti is on the path towards further consolidating its democracy, national unity and stability. We commend the efforts of the Government and the people of Haiti to that end, and those efforts must continue.

However, as was evident during the Council's visit in June, enormous peacebuilding and development needs remain. As the Secretary-General stressed in his report, there are ongoing challenges in the areas of governance, human rights, gender equality, judicial reform and institution-building. We must support Haiti now so as to ensure its self-reliance in future. The role of the international community and the United Nations country team will be crucial. With the ownership of the Haitian authorities, Japan will continue to support the development and improvement of basic social services, as well as post-disaster reconstruction.

We have focused a great deal on alleviating the suffering caused by the devastating cholera outbreak. Japan has provided more than $9 million through UNICEF and other international organizations since 2010, with a focus on the construction and improvement of water-, sanitation- and hygiene-related facilities. We will continue our support, especially through preventive social, economic and public-health measures and poverty reduction, as well as resilient and high-quality infrastructure.

Haiti has made commendable progress under challenging conditions, but continued United Nations efforts and the attention of the Security Council continue to be necessary. Japan looks forward to working with the international community to ensure that recent improvements lead to lasting progress in the lives of the Haitian people.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti Sandra Honoré for her presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/840), as well as her assessment of the situation in the country on the eve of the transition to the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH).

We agree that since the adoption of resolution 2350 (2017) in April, there have been positive developments in the country, made possible thanks to the efforts of the Government and the President, with the support of the international community.

We are pleased to note that the Secretary-General's report indicates that the withdrawal of the military component and the reduction of United Nations police personnel have not negatively affected the security situation. Nevertheless, the statistics provided by the

report pertaining to crime on the island continue to be a cause for serious concern. Despite the improvements in certain indicators, the Haitian National Police, supported by Blue Helmets, should continue to consider that to be a matter of the highest priority as one of the key components for ultimately normalizing life in the country. We hope that the timely and coherent implementation of the 2017-2021 strategic development plan for the national police will contribute to that.

We have carefully reviewed the information in the report concerning the progress made in transitioning from the Stabilization Mission to the Mission for Justice Support, which will begin operating on 16 October. With respect to delegating responsibilities to the Mission and the country team, we believe that, while supporting the Government of Haiti in the various areas of governance, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator should be guided by the main provisions of the mandate that had been given to the Stabilization Mission, as well as by the primary principle of national ownership. That also applies to the new Mission. Its conscientious support is extremely important for the Government, which should become increasingly independent every day, in terms of both defining its priorities and implementing peacebuilding tasks in Haiti.

In that regard, we fully agree with the conclusion of the report that programmes in the areas of security, policy and development must be framed by the Government and be based on the views of the population. Moreover, of no less importance, all national stakeholders should have a sense of shared responsibility for sustaining peace. The top priority of national ownership, with the support of the international community where absolutely necessary, is confirmed not only in the part of the report concerning the legacy of the Stabilization Mission but also by experience, and one of the most striking examples of that is in the neighbouring country of Colombia.

In conclusion, we would like once again to express our support for the Government and the people of Haiti, which is on the path to stability and prosperity while overcoming not only internal disagreements but also the devastating consequences of the natural disasters of September, namely, Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The Caribbean region has historically been vulnerable to a complex natural environment. In order to overcome the environmental risks more expeditiously, a strong Government and a cohesive society are necessary, which through joint efforts will allow for restoring, building and strengthening Haiti's potential.

We would also like to express our gratitude to Ms. Sandra Honoré and all the previous Heads of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti for their contribution to the progress achieved by the host country with the support of the international community.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I would like to join others in thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Sandra Honoré for her comprehensive briefing and in welcoming the presence of His Excellency the Ambassador of the Republic of Haiti.

In a few days, on 15 October, we will mark the official closing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the opening of the new United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), pursuant to resolution 2350 (2017), of 13 April 2017.

Clearly this new chapter in the United Nations presence in Haiti, which is about to begin, is a great illustration of the significant progress achieved by the Government and the people of Haiti with the support of the international community and, above all, the United Nations, which made possible the election of President Jovenel Moise, the return to constitutional order, the improved security situation and the resumption of a normal political life, which we nevertheless hope will further be improved through an enhanced political dialogue, which is necessary for the strengthening of democratic institutions.

It is important to note that since then, in order to improve the living conditions of the Haitian people — particularly those in rural areas — and also to build the country's resilience to frequent natural disasters and lay the groundwork for sustainable development, the new authorities have been actively implementing reforms in all areas, including socioeconomic development, through the launch of the flagship Caravan of Change programme, which has intensified and expanded to several of the country's regions.

We believe that upon review, MINUSTAH can be proud of the work it has accomplished, despite the difficulties posed by cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and the outbreak of the cholera epidemic. The Mission was deployed in 2004 in a politically very

unstable environment with widespread violence, yet 13 years later it has been able, alongside the Haitian Government and people, to help lay the foundations of lasting stability, better security and a future that Haitians can glimpse with a sense of optimism.

My delegation would therefore like to once again pay well-deserved tribute to Ms. Honoré, Head of MINUSTAH, as well as to all the Mission's personnel and the troop- and police-contributing countries, for helping the Haitian people. Nevertheless, we all recognize that many challenges will still need to be addressed in order to enable Haiti to consolidate the progress made, which remains fragile. In that regard and in terms of security, we are hopeful that MINUJUSTH will help to put greater emphasis on building the capacity of and training the Haitian National Police so that it can improve its professionalization and achieve the objectives set out in its 2017-2021 strategic development plan, following the significant progress already made.

Similarly, we are confident that with the support of the new Mission, control and accountability mechanisms will be strengthened, the process of legislative reform will be completed, and the entities that promote and support human rights will be strengthened so as to allow them to conduct their work effectively. Given its ambitious mission, MINUJUSTH deserves the full support of the Security Council, hence the support and confidence that my delegation wishes to express to the women and men who will have the inspiring task of fulfilling its mandate.

At the same time, my delegation calls on the international community to remain mobilized to confront the cholera epidemic that continues to plague Haiti. That can be done by supporting the 10-year Government plan to eliminate cholera in Haiti, as well as through the new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti (resolution 71/161), which has just been adopted by the General Assembly.

Senegal urges the States Members of the United Nations to work collectively, in close collaboration with the Haitian authorities and especially with the victims, to effectively implement that new approach. My country welcomes the three-pronged strategy outlined by Mrs. Josette Sheeran, the new Special Envoy for Haiti, which aims to continue to contain the epidemic, mobilize additional resources and, above all, learn from this painful experience so as to improve United Nations interventions around the world.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): Today marks the end of an important chapter with the completion of the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the beginning of another significant chapter, with the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH). We thank Special Representative Sandra Honoré for her briefing on the latest situation in Haiti and for the steps taken to implement the withdrawal of MINUSTAH and ensure a smooth transition to the new Mission.

Over the past 13 years, MINUSTAH has played an important role in ensuring security and stability, restoring the rule of law and promoting national dialogue and institution-building in Haiti. It also supported recovery efforts after the 2010 earthquake and the devastating impact of six major hurricanes, although its image was tarnished by its handling of the cholera outbreak. We realize that there is now a new approach to deal with the issue and address the suffering of the victims. It is important that the international community support the Haitian Government in its efforts to eliminate the disease.

We welcome the continued progress made in Haiti in consolidating its democracy and institutional stability, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/840). We also take note of the progress made in the overall security situation in the country, which remains relatively stable. As we mark the end of MINUSTAH's mandate, we recognize its contribution in that regard.

Nevertheless, Haiti continues to face enormous challenges and vulnerabilities. There is therefore a need to take decisive steps towards creating greater social and political cohesion and reinforcing State institutions so as to sustain the gains made in recent years. The conduct of a successful national dialogue to address socioeconomic grievances and to bridge communication between the Government and other stakeholders in the country would be very significant in forging a common vision and ensuring greater stability and development.

The sustained and coordinated engagement of all bilateral and international partners is critical to securing sufficient and timely assistance for the sustainable development of Haiti in a manner that respects its sovereignty. We hope that Ms. Josette Sheeran will

build the necessary partnership with a wide range of stakeholders to support the work of the United Nations in Haiti.

The establishment of MINUJUSTH is indeed very important to consolidate peace by strengthening the institutions of justice and the rule of law, as well as supporting the institutional and operational capacity of the Haitian National Police. We appreciate the work that has been done to ensure a smooth transition to MINUJUSTH, in line with resolution 2350 (2017). We also recognize regional and subregional organizations, in particular the Organization of American States, the Union of South American Nations and the Caribbean Community for their important roles in the process of the stabilization and reconstruction of Haiti.

Finally, I would like to express our appreciation to Ms. Sandra Honoré for her dedicated service and to all departing MINUSTAH civilian staff and uniformed personnel for their steadfast commitment and contribution in carrying out the Mission's mandate. Ethiopia is pleased to have made a very modest contribution through the deployment of police personnel. I wish to conclude by once again reiterating our solidarity with the brotherly people and Government of Haiti as they continue to strive to consolidate the progress made in recent years and address the multiple challenges that their nation is facing.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Ms. Sandra Honoré, for her briefing and for her dedicated service. In just a few days' time, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) will take over from MINUSTAH. That will testify to both the successful completion of MINUSTAH's mandate and our readiness to move towards a new form of the United Nations presence in the country, one that is better adapted to the requirements and conditions on the ground.

We would like to commend in particular the important role that MINUSTAH has played in ensuring stability and security during particularly difficult times for Haiti, such as the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in 2010. The Mission was also there assisting Haitians in arranging the latest elections and providing urgent aid after Hurricane Matthew. Its contribution to strengthening the capacity of State institutions, in particular the Haitian National Police, is second to none. In that light, Ukraine pays special tribute to all of the brave men and women who have served in the Mission over the past 13 years.

We are pleased that the country has overcome numerous challenges and difficulties and returned to a constitutional order based on the will of the voters. At the same time, as the Secretary-General rightly stated in his recent report (S/2017/840), the country should waste no time in making full use of the current window of opportunity. It is critical to advance dialogue among all political stakeholders so as to ensure stability and security, along with further democratic consolidation.

We fully support the Government's calls for broader unity as a prerequisite for moving forward with the reform process, ensuring respect for human rights, combating criminality and sexual and gender-based violence, putting an end to impunity and providing for accountability. In that regard, MINUSTAH should provide the crucial support needed to advance those important transformations and consolidate the progress achieved. We have full confidence that MINUJUSTH will also deliver effectively on the mandated tasks, such as strengthening the rule of law, further supporting the development of the Haitian National Police and engaging in human rights monitoring and reporting. However, in order to ensure the success of the mission, the commitment of the Haitian authorities will be essential.

The recent report of the Secretary-General highlighted the gains made over the years in developing the capacity of the Haitian National Police. We welcome the adoption of the new strategic development plan of the National Police covering the period up until 2021. At the same time, further prioritization of the Haitian National Police's build-up is essential, both for the Government and for MINUJUSTH. Taking note of the Government's decision to re-establish the armed forces, we share the idea that such an initiative should not affect the work being done on the development of the Haitian National Police.

However, the police is only one of the components of the justice sector that require further reform. The Haitian authorities need to carefully balance capacity development with enhanced civilian oversight. Equally important are the continued efforts of the international community, multilateral agencies, Haiti's regional partners and individual States in supporting long-term security and development in the country.

We recognize that considerable national, regional and international efforts have been made to combat cholera. On 13 July the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/161, on the new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti. Ukraine has responded to the Secretary-General's appeal and has contributed to the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

We share the concerns about sexual exploitation and abuse related to the United Nations presence in Haiti that were raised during the Council's visit to the country in June. Having signed last month with the Secretary-General the Voluntary Compact regarding that problem, Ukraine is strongly committed to a policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse for all peacekeepers and United Nations staff, uniformed or civilian.

To conclude, no progress could have been achieved without strong will on the part of the Haitian people. While facing many political, economic and social challenges, as well as creeping natural disasters, they have demonstrated remarkable resilience in rebuilding the country, despite all odds. We express our sincere congratulations to them. Ukraine remains a committed partner for Haiti in its endeavour to move forward on the path to sustainable peace and development and to build "one Haiti for all Haitians", as President Moise said in his inauguration speech.

Mr. Skau (Sweden): I associate myself with the statement that will be made by the observer of the European Union later this morning.

Let me begin by joining others in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for her final report to the Council and for the diligence and professionalism that she and all the staff of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) have shown as they carried out their mission to support the people of Haiti. We really appreciate their work.

I would also take the opportunity to pay tribute once again to the many United Nations staff members who lost their lives serving with MINUSTAH, including my very close friend Kai Buchholz, who died in the tragic earthquake of 2010. Kai was a fun, caring and clever friend and an exceptionally dedicated and professional United Nations colleague, and I miss him very much indeed.

The conclusion of the mandate of MINUSTAH on 15 October and the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) mark an important milestone for Haiti. During the 13 years of MINUSTAH's mandate, the Haitian people have made significant progress in the consolidation of democracy, as well as security and stability. We commend Haiti for that progress, which has opened a window of opportunity for Haiti's future. However, challenges remain. President Moise and his Government have set out some important priorities, namely, to improve economic development, infrastructure, resilience, security, the rule of law, respect for human rights and national dialogue. The Government must now spare no effort in delivering on those commitments.

The rule of law should continue to be a top priority for the Government. The strengthening of the Haitian National Police and a continued focus on judicial reform, including fighting corruption, will also be absolutely crucial for inclusive socioeconomic development and the creation of better conditions for private investment. It is important that all actors, including national authorities, political parties, civil society and the private sector, work together towards that end. Previous experience has shown the important role that policing plays in providing a bridge between security and development in transition processes. Sweden currently contributes 10 police officers to MINUSTAH and will contribute the same number to MINUJUSTH.

As Haiti moves forward to address its challenges, the partnership between Haiti, bilateral donors and the United Nations needs to evolve so as to provide the most appropriate model of support in the spirit of sustaining peace and supporting inclusive socioeconomic development. As more and more tasks are transitioned from the United Nations Mission to the United Nations country team, the international community must also step up and ensure that the United Nations agencies have adequate resources to effectively carry out their important roles.

No society can reach its full potential without the full, equal and effective participation of women. As the Secretary-General notes in his report (S/2017/840), more efforts are needed to protect and promote women's rights in Haiti. The important work undertaken by MINUSTAH on gender mainstreaming and against sexual and gender-based violence must not be lost. It is important that MINUJUSTH continue to integrate

gender throughout its policies and maintain a strategic focus, coordination and budget for gender issues.

We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that it is important that the Haitian authorities put in place binding measures for the application of the constitutional minimum quota of 30 per cent women in public office. The election of more than 30 per cent women at the municipal and local levels is promising and will hopefully act as a springboard for the increased participation of women at the national level as well in future.

We were happy to co-sponsor resolution 71/161, in support of the Secretary-General's new approach to eradicate cholera and build resilience in Haiti. Sweden is currently exploring how to best support the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund and we encourage others to consider contributing to the Trust Fund as well, so as to collectively bring to an end cholera in Haiti.

The people of Haiti have made huge progress in rebuilding their country over the past 14 years, not least by overcoming the devastation caused by the earthquake in 2010. We must continue to stand with them. Sweden will remain a committed partner for Haiti as the country begins a newchapter.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

France associates itself with the statements to be made later by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Peru, on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti.

With just a few days remaining until the closure of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), France commends the work done over the past 13 years by the United Nations, and especially the tireless efforts of the Special Representatives and their teams. We also acknowledge the extraordinary commitment of the troop-contributing countries. Our thoughts go to the men and women who lost their lives while serving in MINUSTAH, especially during the earthquake of 2010 and in particular, Special Representative Hédi Annabi, who died in that tragic event.

In following up on MINUSTAH's remarkable work, the capacity-building and professionalization of the Haitian National Police must remain a priority. The United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), which will take the reins on 16 October, must build on the success already achieved in order to fulfil the objectives set out in resolution 2350 (2017) — strengthening the rule of law, supporting the Haitian National Police and monitoring the human rights situation. The new Mission must also take into account the needs of the Haitian authorities and civil society and continue to support Haiti on its path to development. In that regard, special attention must be paid to justice. Progress in the area of the rule of law is intrinsically linked to strengthening the professionalism and independence of the judiciary, establishing a legal framework that meets international standards, particularly in the area of criminal justice, and implementing a prison system that is compatible with the country's needs and respects the rights of inmates.

The issue of human rights will have an especially significant role to play in the new Mission. No political, social or economic reform can succeed without taking human rights into account from conception right up through implementation. The consolidation of democratic institutions also depends on this, and we hope that MINUJUSTH will regularly report back to the Council on the latest developments in that field.

It is solely up to the Haitian authorities and the sovereign people of Haiti to establish their political priorities for the years to come. By modifying its presence, the United Nations has shown its willingness to continue assisting Haiti and responding to its new needs. It is not trying to take the place of its leaders or stage a hasty withdrawal; on the contrary, MINUJUSTH will give the relationship between Haiti and its partner countries new momentum. We have every faith that the Haitian authorities will take full advantage of this opportunity. This is an essential stage as we transition from an assistance-focused approach to one centred on sustainable development. In addition to MINUJUSTH, the country team will have an equally important role to play in its future developments.

I would like to conclude my statement by paying tribute to Ms. Sandra Honoré, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as to all MINUSTAH personnel, and by expressing our full support and solidarity to the great people of Haiti.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Haiti, and it gives me great pleasure to welcome him.

Mr. Régis (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank the President for inviting the Government of Haiti to participate in this special meeting of the Security Council devoted to considering the final report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/840) on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), presented to us by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, whose mandate comes to a close on 15 October in accordance with resolution 2350 (2017) of 13 April.

The report is particularly significant because the Secretary-General, with the acute sense of reality that we know he possesses, provides a meticulous and coherent assessment of MINUSTAH during its 13 years in Haiti and draws valuable lessons from it for future peacekeeping operations. He also offers an objective analysis of the recent developments in the country's political and economic situation and its immediate and long-term challenges. He also welcomes the new directions that the country is taking, as well as the opportunities arising from the restoration of its political stability. The report notes that

> "Eight months after the President of Haiti, Jovenel Moïse, assumed office, the country continues to take steps to further consolidate its democracy and stability". (*S/2017/840, para. 2*)

The Haitian Government welcomes the Secretary-General's appreciation for that progress, which all observers have acknowledged. That progress is the result of the firm determination of the President of the Republic and the Government to strengthen the rule of law and democracy, strengthen State institutions and ensure the promotion and protection of human rights, while at the same time implementing essential structural reforms that will enable our national institutions to cope with recurring crises and deal with our many and complex development challenges.

In that regard, as the Secretary-General rightly underscored,

> "The Government continues to assume greater leadership over the development agenda, as evidenced by the 'Caravan of Change' programme and by investments designed to strengthen the social and economic infrastructure." (*ibid., para. 23*)

That approach also encompasses the fight against corruption, which the President has made a top priority for his national programme of action.

The Haitian Government has also taken due note of certain areas of concern raised in the report, particularly the judicial system's limited progress, lengthy delays in the adoption of certain crucial legislative reforms and persistent concerns related to human rights, especially the issue of prolonged preventive detention and overcrowding in prisons. The Government has given its full assurances that it will focus on those issues and on finding solutions to them. It is fully behind the Secretary-General's call for an inclusive national dialogue aimed at seeking solutions that will enable us to strengthen social and political cohesion, consolidate democratic institutions and re-start efforts to achieve a sustainable economy.

With regard to the armed forces, the Government shares the Secretary-General's view on the opportunity to make their remobilization a unifying national project that can enjoy the people's confidence. That is the approach we intend to take, in line with the provisions of the Constitution on re-establishing a national army that will be essentially focused on development.

The Haitian Government subscribes to the report's conclusions on the assessment of MINUSTAH. Even if the progress it has made can be considered limited in certain cases, the Mission has succeeded in fulfilling its three key objectives as outlined in resolution 1542 (2004) — security and stability, support for the political process and building the rule of law and promoting human rights. Today Haiti's situation is radically different from what it was in 2004, when, according to the Security Council, it constituted a threat to international peace and security in the region, justifying the deployment of a peacekeeping and stabilization mission. As the report emphasizes, political and institutional stability is now being strengthened. Haiti is fully capable of ensuring security and providing a secure and stable environment conducive to a smoothly running political process and the revitalization of investment, the economy and development. An end to instability and political uncertainty, the restoration of the rule of law, the peaceful renewal of democratic institutions and the strengthening of the capacities of various State institutions, including the judicial system and the Haitian National Police, are all valuable achievements that must be protected and consolidated.

Similarly, during its 13 years in Haiti, MINUSTAH has implemented a wide range of valuable projects and initiatives, including 1,788 quick-impact projects in various areas, such as the rule of law, good governance, public infrastructure, revenue-generating activities, environmental protection, drinking-water supplies, as well as other social and humanitarian activities. In particular, the Secretary-General's points to our community violence reduction programme as exemplary and rightly urges that it serve as a model for future United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Of course, within this assessment, we cannot ignore the major shadow that has been cast on our situation by the cholera epidemic, which has brought thousands of deaths and for which the United Nations has finally admitted responsibility, recognizing the role it played in triggering a disease that has caused such terrible suffering for the Haitian people. In that regard, the Government of Haiti would like to commend the Secretary-General's determination and personal commitment to carry out what he calls a moral duty by effectively implementing a new approach to the fight against cholera. The United Nations

> "has a moral responsibility to the victims, as well as to support Haiti in overcoming the epidemic and in building sound water, sanitation and health-care systems". (*S/2017/840, para. 52*)

The Government of Haiti associates itself with the urgent appeal to Member States to ensure that the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund is finally granted the necessary resources to fulfil all of the commitments made and implement the two components of the plan of action against cholera without delay. It is high time that was done.

Today, there is peace, security and political stability in Haiti, which is reason to rejoice. However, we are all aware that much remains to be done. The report highlights a number of deficiencies, gaps to be filled, and delays and challenges to be overcome. For its part, the Haitian Government is working hard to remedy that situation. But this is a long-term project that will require continued, persistent action. That is why the Government of Haiti and the Security Council have agreed to establish a mission to consolidate the achievements of MINUSTAH in three main areas — strengthening the rule of law, with a particular focus on improving the justice system; developing the Haitian National Police and promoting and protecting human rights. The new United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) is the expression of that new framework of cooperation between the United Nations and Haiti, aimed at consolidating the achievements made so far. However, I should emphasize that MINUJUSTH will carry out its mandate in a context that clearly no longer reflects the traditional threats to international peace cited in resolution 1542 (2004), which created MINUSTAH. We therefore hope that this new reality will be taken into account in the next Security Council resolution on the subject and in the new agreement that will govern MINUJUSTH's presence in Haiti as of 16 October, which is essentially one of technical cooperation.

Stabilization in Haiti has now been achieved. As MINUSTAH's mandate ends, now is the moment to hail its contribution to consolidating civil peace, democracy and security, establishing the rule of law and promoting human rights in Haiti. The Government of Haiti would like to express its gratitude to members of the Security Council, the Secretariat and all of the entities of the United Nations system, as well as all Member States, especially troop-contributing countries, for their participation and ongoing support for the Mission. We also thank and congratulate Ms. Honoré, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, for her outstanding work and dedication to the cause of peace.

If I might deviate from my written text, I would like to salute the memory of Mr. Hédi Annabi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Haiti, and his deputy, Mr. Da Costa, as well as the United Nations peacekeeping soldiers who met a tragic death during the devastating earthquake of 12 January 2010 in Haiti. On a personal note, I met with Mr. Annabi, who came to lecture at a conference held at an academic institution I directed, two months before the earthquake.

The country is now turning over a new leaf. In that context, the Government of Haiti believes that cooperation with the United Nations system should be expanded, revitalized and, above all, better adapted to current realities, while focusing on the country's true needs, within the framework of a genuine strategy for achieving sustainable peace that will enable Haitian institutions to take ownership of the tools needed to ensure peace, security and stability and consolidate the rule of law, while resolutely addressing the

country's economic and social modernization and sustainable development.

As MINUJUSTH prepares to begin its mandate, the Haitian Government strongly hopes that the new Mission will make a lasting contribution to our efforts to meet the challenge of sustaining peace, which goes hand in hand with growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti, which includes Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Guatemala, the United States, Uruguay and my own country, Peru.

We thank the President for organizing this debate to discuss the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/840) on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). The report covers the main events that have occurred since the publication on 12 July of the previous report (S/2017/604) and the progress that has been made as MINUSTAH comes to a close. It also covers the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH).

The Group of Friends welcomes the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Haiti, Ms. Sandra Honoré Braithwaite, and thanks her for her detailed briefing. As MINUSTAH's mandate comes to an end, we would like to thank Ms. Honoré, particularly for her role in supporting the political process in Haiti, professionalizing the police and maintaining a safe and stable environment.

The Group acknowledges the work of all the previous Special Representatives who have contributed to the stabilization of Haiti and wishes to pay special tribute to the former Special Representative for Haiti, Mr. Hédi Annabi, who gave his life in the service of peacekeeping during the earthquake of 2010. The Group also recognizes the important role that MINUSTAH has played in guaranteeing the stability and security of Haiti, expresses its deep appreciation to the staff of MINUSTAH and to all Member States that have contributed to the Mission, and pays homage to those who were injured or lost their lives in the performance of their duty.

The strengthening of the rule of law and democratic institutions and the establishment of a political culture conducive to democratic stability and the improvement of socioeconomic conditions are key elements for achieving greater security, stability and prosperity in Haiti. The Group of Friends reaffirms the primary responsibility of the national Government for implementing its strategies for peacebuilding and peacekeeping in order to address the interconnected nature of Haiti's challenges. The Group of Friends acknowledges that, eight months after President Jovenel Moise took office, Haiti continues to take steps to further consolidate its democracy and stability, and we encourage the Haitian authorities to conduct indirect elections to form municipal, departmental and interdepartmental councils and assemblies, as provided for in the Constitution. The Group also notes that the overall security situation has remained relatively stable and has not been affected by the ongoing withdrawal of MINUSTAH's troops and the reduction of the United Nations Police (UNPOL) presence.

The Group believes that strengthening the Haitian National Police (HNP) is one of the most important contributions that the successor Mission will make to further consolidate the stabilization of Haiti and in that regard welcomes the continued increase in its capacity to ensure public order and provide security to Haitian citizens and takes note of the objectives of its strategic development plan for 2017-2021. We have noted the implementation of a revised approach to mentoring and counselling conceived as part of the Mission transition strategy towards MINUJUSTH and observe that UNPOL has continued to work with the HNP in order to strengthen its capacity to handle the issue of sexual and gender-based violence.

The Group of Friends underscores the importance of national ownership and reiterates the vitality of the commitment of the Government of Haiti to strengthen the rule of law and continue to make progress in the justice and security sectors. The Group of Friends commends the efforts of the Government of Haiti to address a number of major problems facing the country, including by intensifying its flagship programme, the Caravan of Change. The Group agrees with the call of the Secretary-General for moving forward on a joint legislative agenda and underlines the need for MINUJUSTH to support the Government in achieving progress in the performance of the judiciary.

The Group of Friends reiterates that there can be no true stability or sustainable development in Haiti without strengthened democratic institutions and credible democratic processes. In that context, the Group emphasizes the importance of promoting the rule of law through the strengthening of Haitian institutions and encourages the Government of Haiti to advance in the fields of justice and human rights, including the empowerment of women and their full participation in decision-making.

The Group of Friends recognizes that strengthening national human rights institutions as well as respecting human rights, including respect for women and children and due process, combating crime and sexual and gender-based violence, putting an end to impunity and prolonged pretrial detention and providing accountability, are essential to safeguarding the rule of law and security in Haiti, including access to justice. In that regard, the Group takes note of the conclusion of the Secretary-General's report that prolonged pretrial detention and prison overcrowding remain a serious human rights problem.

The Group of Friends reaffirms its solidarity with and commitment to the people and the Government of Haiti in their pursuit of stability, reconstruction, recovery, socioeconomic development and democratic consolidation, and recognizes that Haiti continues to face multiple development challenges that require the implementation of structural reforms.

The Group of Friends welcomes the General Assembly's resolution 71/161 on the new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti, which aims to renew the Organization's efforts to eliminate cholera transmission and care for victims of the disease. In that regard, the Group of Friends would like to take this opportunity to invite Member States, regional, international and bilateral donors, financial institutions, the private sector and other donors to provide greater voluntary financial support and other appropriate support for the new approach. We note that the United Nations country team will be responsible for implementing the new approach, with the coordination of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and welcome the 10-year national plan for the elimination of cholera as the basis of the new Government's policy on the issue, as well as the renewed engagement of the Government with the United Nations and other international partners to that end.

The Group of Friends notes that although significant progress has been made, Haiti continues to face significant humanitarian challenges as well as a vulnerability and particular exposure to natural hazards. In addition, the Group affirms that progress in Haiti's reconstruction and social and economic development, supported by effective and coordinated international assistance and an increase in its institutional capacity to benefit from that assistance, is crucial to achieving sustainable stability, and reiterates the need for security to be supported by sustainable development, efforts in which the Government of Haiti will play a leadership role with the help of the United Nations country team.

The Group of Friends welcomes the Secretary-General's report of 5 October submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2350 (2017). We believe that MINUSTAH has succeeded in stabilizing Haiti and that it is time to begin the transition to a new United Nations presence, focused on strengthening Haiti's rule-of-law institutions, providing support and capacity-building for the National Police and participating in human rights monitoring and reporting, as set forth in paragraph 66 of the Secretary-General's report.

The Group notes that MINUSTAH has continued to implement its comprehensive withdrawal as well as the joint MINUSTAH-country team transition plan, with a view to ensuring a gradual transfer of tasks and assets to MINUJUSTH, the Haitian authorities, the country team and other partners, so that the Mission can close on 15 October and so that the mandatory core areas, including the good-offices function and the commitment to the rule of law, justice reforms, police development and human rights addressed by MINUSTAH, will be taken up to MINUJUSTH on 16 October, while United Nations support in the areas of governance will be implemented through the country team, if resources permit.

The Group of Friends also welcomes the fact that MINUJUSTH will work closely with the country team to ensure a smoother transfer of the tasks necessary for carrying out the reform of the rule of law.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank France for convening today's debate and to reaffirm the Government of Mexico's gratitude to Ms. Sandra Honoré Braithwaite, Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in

Haiti (MINUSTAH), and her team, for their tireless work over the years and their proven commitment to the Haitian people.

The winding down of MINUSTAH and the establishment of the new United Nations Mission in Support of Justice in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) are positive developments for Haiti. Mexico, as part of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, has witnessed the iron determination of the Haitian Government and people to build prosperity in their country. The United Nations should support the Haitian Government in those efforts, in accordance with the national priorities that Haiti itself has defined.

This new stage is a rare opportunity to test the concepts behind United Nations coordination of peace, humanitarian assistance and development on the ground. We expect the United Nations country team in Haiti to have impeccable coordination, consistency, efficiency and transparency. Haiti represents a unique theatre in which the United Nations system can show that it is possible to make the transition from conflict management and humanitarian assistance to coordinating a truly sustainable peace conducive to the development and fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

The United Nations has a moral and economic debt to the Haitian people. We must find an appropriate response to the problems caused by the terrible cholera epidemic so that we can care for the families of the victims and those affected by the epidemic. General Assembly resolution 71/161, on the new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti, recognizes the Organization's responsibility to the Haitian people. In that context, I am pleased to inform the Security Council that Mexico will allocate 100 per cent of its unencumbered balance from MINUSTAH to the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund. I urge the international community to increase its support for the fulfilment of the mandate of the new Mission, bearing in mind that its success will depend to a large extent on continued support from those who have been part of MINUSTAH and from new contributors.

The two years of Mexico's participation in MINUSTAH enabled my country to support the efforts of the United Nations in Haiti and the Mexican armed forces to gain experience and build their capacities for peace operations in a new phase of Mexico's relationship with the United Nations. My country will continue to participate in MINUJUSTH, as we believe that it responds to the important issue of adapting peacekeeping operations' mandates to the political and security context on the ground. If we are to strengthen institutions in Haiti, particularly as regards developing the operational capacities of its National Police, as well as making progress in enhancing the rule of law and the protection of human rights, full international support for MINUJUSTH will continue to be essential, and Mexico therefore wishes to contribute police personnel to the Mission.

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to the efforts of the thousands of men and women who gave their all to MINUSTAH, some of them losing their lives. I reiterate Mexico's belief in the importance of making sustainable peace the guiding thread for the effectiveness and coherence that we expect from the work of the United Nations in building and maintaining international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Peru on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti, and would like to make the following brief additional comments.

We thank Special Representative Sandra Honoré for her presentation of the latest report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2350 (2017) (S/2017/840). As the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) draws to a close, we are grateful for her commitment and professionalism at its helm and for her work to ensure the stability of Haiti. We also welcome the Permanent Representative of Haiti, Ambassador Denis Régis, and want to highlight the joint efforts of the Haitian authorities and MINUSTAH to build lasting stability and a better future for the country.

Argentina pays tribute to the personnel of the various countries that have deployed troops to MINUSTAH during the 13 years of its existence — men and women, civilians, military and police — as their contribution to the fulfilment of the Mission's mandate. We wish to highlight the invaluable efforts of the nearly 13,000 Argentine army troops deployed since 2004, including an army battalion, an air-force unit and a mobile field hospital, which recently left the country, as well as

the 900 officers of the Argentine National Police who participated in the Mission. We especially remember all who gave their lives to the service of peacekeeping and security in Haiti, including four from Argentina.

We agree with the assessment of the Mission's legacy in the Secretary-General's report, highlighting its significant achievements despite the enormous difficulties it has faced, which included one earthquake and six devastating hurricanes. After 13 years and despite many persistent challenges, MINUSTAH leaves behind a relatively stable country with a democratically elected President, three functioning branches of Government and a window of opportunity for making progress towards sustainable development. During that time, among other things, the Mission supported the efforts of the Haitian Government to strengthen its rule-of-law institutions — the police and the justice system in particular — and to implement the various human rights mechanisms. It also helped 6 million Haitians through violence-reduction programmes and 7 million through quick-impact projects, in line with priorities identified by the Haitian authorities.

Argentina supports the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on cases of sexual abuse and exploitation in Haiti, as well as the Organization's new approach to cholera in that country, with the hope that the United Nations Mission in Support of Justice in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) will contribute to implementing and monitoring those policies, in close collaboration with the Haitian authorities. In that regard, my country recently signed the Voluntary Compact on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and has made a voluntary contribution to the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

Argentina notes the continuing progress that has been made in closing MINUSTAH and establishing MINUJUSTH, in particular as it relates to the future implementation of the new Mission's important mandate to assist in consolidating the country's rule-of-law institutions, strengthening and professionalizing the Haitian National Police (HNP) and promoting and protecting human rights. In that regard, and in addition to continuing our bilateral cooperation with Haiti, we will continue to contribute trained police personnel to the new Mission, in accordance with our ability to do so and the specific requirements set forth in the new police advisory and oversight programme, in the framework of the Secretary-General's transition plan, as well as the Haitian National Police's 2017-2021 strategic development plan. In that connection, notwithstanding any sovereign decisions that may be taken by Haiti on issues related to its security and defence, we are confident that the planned development of the armed forces in the country will not interfere with the effective implementation of the HNP's strategic development plan or involve funds originally earmarked for development.

In line with the Secretary-General's latest report, we welcome Haiti's involvement with international human rights mechanisms and encourage State institutions, human rights institutions and civil society to cooperate extensively with the human rights component of MINUJUSTH.

I would like to conclude by once again reiterating Argentina's commitment to the Haitian people and acknowledging the work of Ms. Sandra Honoré and all the military, police and civil personnel of MINUSTAH. We also honour the memory of those who gave their lives in fulfilling their noble mission to help Haiti make progress on its path to sustainable peace and development.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank France and you personally, Madam Ambassador, for having convened this meeting, which marks the official closure of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) after 13 long years.

We have mixed feelings today, because now we can say that it is possible to have United Nations missions that conclude their mandates and move into new phases, as in this case, where MINUSTAH is transitioning to the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) in order to strengthen Haitian institutions and be able to respond adequately to the challenges that all democracies face, as Ambassador Régis just noted in his statement.

I would echo the words of appreciation expressed here in connection with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Sandra Honoré. She has brought honour to her post and to her gender through her efforts for the Mission, her leadership and her commitment. Above all I would stress, as the Ambassador just stated, the work she has done in recent years, which has promoted coordinated efforts with the national authorities, the Government and Haitian society, including in difficult periods of political instability, in which the commitment of all sectors and national ownership were key. I thank Ms. Honoré and

her team and all her predecessors, some of whom paid with their lives in that effort.

Colombia endorses the statement delivered by the representative of Peru on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti. We are convinced of the value of the role played by MINUSTAH in guaranteeing and ensuring stability and security in the country up to a point of no return, whose logical consequence was to develop and transition towards a quest for justice and the strengthening of the rule of law. As President Juan Manuel Santos said in this very Chamber when we held the presidency of the Council in 2012, this is a natural transition, a transition from a peacekeeping operation to a genuine operation focused on development.

The actions undertaken to ensure that the Haitian people have a strengthened and professional national police force have the full support of Latin America, as has been made clear here. The Colombian Government will continue to contribute our men and women police officers and to provide training in our country, focusing in particular on the training of Haitian women police officers, who will undoubtedly play a key role in the coexistence and security of their communities, within the framework of the strategic development plan established by the Haitian National Police.

If we all pool our efforts to preserve the progress made and overcome the tremendous challenges and obstacles that remain, particularly in the area of economic and social development, with the ongoing support of the country team, we are sure that the brave people of Haiti, with whom Colombia has stood since their independence, will be able to reach their maximum potential.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. João Pedro Vale de Almeida, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

Mr. Vale de Almeida (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. I thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2017/840) and Ms. Honoré for her briefing and her work as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the European Free Trade Association country of Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

On 13 April, the Security Council adopted resolution 2350 (2017), which extended for the last time the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) by a further six months. The resolution contains the legal framework for the transition to the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), whose role will be to strengthen the police and the rule of law, and to defend and promote human rights.

MINUSTAH played a key role in the field of citizen security in Haiti, including by ensuring security during particularly difficult times, such as during the recent elections.

The long period of institutional instability that has characterized the political process in Haiti finally seems to be behind us, at least with regard to the electoral process. This has made possible the transparent and credible election of a President who, despite a very low turnout, obtained a broad majority of votes. The National Assembly was also renewed, and the new Government's programme has been given a vote of confidence. Despite major difficulties and weaknesses in the system, we congratulate the country on its return to constitutional order based on the will of voters. This was urgently needed in order for Haiti to be able to address the numerous political, economic, social and environmental challenges facing the country.

However, the return to constitutional order is not enough to guarantee the democratic stability and the development that the country needs. Bold reforms of the Constitution, the electoral system and the judicial system are needed to restore the confidence of the Haitian people in their democracy and in the political system in its entirety. It is particularly important to ensure genuine access to equitable justice for all. Signs of a willingness to reform have been shown, but they must be pursued, and the historic opportunity offered by this period of stability and legitimacy must not be lost.

As in recent years, the efforts of all parties to guarantee the stability and security of Haitian citizens continue to be crucial elements for the process of democratic consolidation. A thorough and consensual

reform of the electoral system is necessary to avoid fresh crises and to regain the confidence of the population.

The European Union remains a faithful partner of the Republic of Haiti and remains determined to support the country in this sensitive phase, in consultation with other partners, including as part of this indispensable reform process. We would also like to recognize the presence here of the Permanent Representative of Haiti.

Resolution 2350 (2017) closes out MINUSTAH on 15 October and replaces it with a reduced mission, MINUJUSTH, which focuses on supporting the Haitian police. The European Union believes that the security situation in Haiti remains very fragile. We therefore deem it essential to complete the strengthening and professionalizing of the Haitian National Police. During the transition period, it will be key to ensure continuity by preparing for it thoroughly. The security and well-being of citizens and the stability of the country are at stake.

In conclusion, allow me to express once again the gratitude of the European Union for the contribution made by MINUSTAH in terms of security and consolidating democracy and the rule of law in Haiti. We welcome the preparations for a transition, which must be designed carefully so as to ensure the continuity of our joint efforts. The series of events that will culminate in making the Haitian State fully responsible for the security of its citizens and civilian protection will need to be clearly defined, planned and implemented, with particular attention paid to respect for human rights in the security sphere and access to impartial justice for all. It is essential that the Haitian police and judicial system be adequately prepared, including in these key areas, for the time when they will have to assume all the tasks currently undertaken by the United Nations Mission.

The European Union, together with the United Nations and the international community, will support the Haitian authorities in consolidating their commitment and their efforts aimed at ensuring a better future of peace, democracy and well-being for all the Haitian people. It is also important that the United Nations apply to future missions best practices and lessons learned from the missions that, as MINUSTAH is doing, are now drawing down.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Venezuela.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by congratulating the delegation of France on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. I also congratulate the delegation of Ethiopia for its leadership last month. Likewise, we welcome the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Ms. Sandra Honoré, whose years of work at the helm of that extraordinary mission were guided by firm commitment and dedication to strengthen the stability and the development of the Haitian people.

Haiti occupies a special place in the minds of Venezuelans. Both nations are united by deep historical, political and cultural ties that stem from the struggle for independence. Haiti and the Haitian revolution served as an inspiration to our nineteenth-century patriots and to the Liberator, Simón Bolivar, who, 200 years ago, was supported by President Alexandre Pétion and the Haitians in the heat of our war of independence. Our country is fully committed to the social development of a free and sovereign Haiti. Since the beginning of our Bolivarian revolution, with the presidency of Commander Hugo Chávez Frías, our cooperation with Haiti has expanded and deepened in an extraordinary way, and that cooperation is built on the principles of solidarity and social justice. A deep sense of solidarity motivates Venezuela's aid to Haiti. We recognize the remarkable efforts made by Haiti in recent years to promote peace, stability and development. Despite the progress achieved, serious challenges remain as a result of prolonged crises and numerous natural disasters, which have had a negative impact on the political, economic and social life of that brotherly country and require the sustained cooperation of the international community.

The colonial Powers made Haiti pay dearly for its freedom and independence. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Haitian people were forced to pay exorbitant sums to the former colonial Power. Moreover, the entire twentieth century was marked by military interventions and brutal dictatorships. Without a doubt, all of that has negatively affected the stability of the country. It is necessary to remember those events as the root causes of the instability throughout the history of that brotherly country in order to understand why the Haitian people have sunk into a deep crisis of political instability and a dramatic situation of poverty and social injustice.

The fight against poverty and for social justice in Haiti, the poorest country in our America, still requires solidarity and direct support for stable assistance mechanisms, in addition to cooperation, in order to address the challenges and structural problems in that country. For example, according to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, between 2014 and 2016, more than 5 million Haitians, equivalent to 47 per cent of the population, were undernourished. It is for that reason that cooperation must be focused on the social-development agenda, within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular those dealing with the eradication of poverty and the reduction of inequalities, with emphasis on the consequences of the disasters caused by climate change in the Caribbean.

In recent years, Haiti has experienced the effects of natural disasters, which have had a devastating effect on its population and its economic and institutional structure. The aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake and the passage of Hurricane Matthew in 2016 continue to be felt and have aggravated even further the overall situation in the country, particularly in the humanitarian sector. In that regard, and as we have done in similar disasters in the recent past, Venezuela heeded the request of the Haitian authorities to provide immediate and ongoing assistance to help overcome the difficulties. That is the essence of solidarity and cooperation among brotherly nations. For that reason, we will continue to provide support, through the PetroCaribe Energy Cooperation Agreement and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, for all initiatives and projects prioritized by the Haitian authorities in the areas of social development, humanitarian assistance, construction, rehabilitation and the maintenance of infrastructure and education, which have had a positive impact on the people. It is worth mentioning that since the beginning of the Bolivarian Revolution, Venezuela's cooperation with Haiti has been aimed at empowering the Haitian State through the strengthening of institutions, as demonstrated by the fact that all funds given by Venezuela for cooperation to Haiti are administered by the authorities of that Caribbean nation. Likewise, since 2005, within the framework of the PetroCaribe Energy Cooperation Agreement, our country continues to provide 100 per cent of the country's fuel-supply needs and 20 per cent of the country's electricity production, as well as various initiatives and projects prioritized by the Haitian Government, which, in recent years, have had a positive impact on the reconstruction efforts in Port-au-Prince and on the economic and social development of that sister nation.

We remain concerned about the impact of the outbreak and spread of cholera in Haiti since 2010. We commend the courage of the United Nations in recognizing its responsibility for the initial spread of the virus and in demonstrating its commitment to providing direct assistance to the victims of the epidemic. That is why it is necessary to strengthen stable mechanisms of cooperation so as to be able to put together a timely and effective response, with a view to strengthening Haiti's national plan for eliminating cholera by 2022, and in order to contribute to a transition from emergency humanitarian interventions to development programmes in the country. In that regard, we strongly support the new approach of the United Nations to combat the spread of cholera. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/161, Venezuela made a financial contribution to the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund. That contribution was intended to support the Secretary-General's initiative to continue to address both immediate and long-term needs in dealing with the cholera epidemic in that sister Caribbean nation.

Now that the work of MINUSTAH has concluded, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti, which will succeed it with new functions, will be focused on supporting the Haitian National Police, promoting the rule of law and strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights. We believe that the United Nations should continue to support the Haitian people and work in close coordination with the Haitian Government on the basis of its national priorities and in strict adherence to the principles of the sovereignty, independence and self-determination of that country. In the process of strengthening institutions, we should support the possibility of creating a professional armed force with the mandate to safeguard the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of that nation.

Venezuela recognizes and wants to pay tribute to the performance of MINUSTAH and its entire staff, civilian and military, as well as the troops contributed by various Latin American nations, in particular Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Peru and Guatemala. In that regard, Venezuela supports the initiative of the Government of President Jovenel Moise to promote the

process of national dialogue and constitutional reform, as well as his initiative to address a number of important issues facing the country through the establishment of several presidential commissions composed of representatives of various national sectors. We consider it vital to continue with the strategic development plan for Haitian National Police for the period 2017-2021.

In conclusion, our country will continue to be a part of regional efforts within the framework of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Our America and the PetroCaribe Energy Cooperation Agreement, and within the framework of United Nations cooperation with the Haitian people, with a view to helping that country overcome the economic and social problems that have for decades affected the brotherly Haitian people in the land of Pétion. Today more than ever, such cooperation is necessary in order to contribute to political stability and strengthened institutions in that Caribbean nation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile): Chile associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Peru on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti. I would also like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Ms. Sandra Honoré, for her briefing, and we take this opportunity to reiterate Chile's gratitude for her tireless efforts to achieve a stable, democratic and prosperous Haiti. Her commitment to the Haitian people and to the values of the Organization have been exemplary. We also welcome the presence today of the Permanent Representative of Haiti, Ambassador Denis Régis.

Chile began its support to Haiti in early March 2004, with 340 troops, the largest contingent that Chile had ever deployed to a United Nations peacekeeping mission. Over the past 13 years, the total Chilean presence in Haiti has amounted to more than 12,000 men and women, including troops and police officers. As President Bachelet said when she greeted the last of our troops on their return to Santiago, all the women and men who were part of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) throughout the 13 years of its operation have been ambassadors for their countries, working together with our Haitian brothers on behalf of their countries and their people. Chile and the international community will never forget the sacrifices of those who served this Mission on behalf of peace and security.

While the military presence of the United Nations in Haiti has come to an end, the principles that led us there are as valid as ever. Chile, through its support and cooperation, together with that of other actors, will continue to build on the achievements of the past 13 years, particularly in the area of cooperation for development and in accordance with Haitian priorities. Indeed, it is not that the United Nations is leaving Haiti, but rather that its presence is changing in order to launch a new phase, with new challenges to the consolidation of peace and development in Haiti. We hope that MINUSTAH's successor, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), will reap the fruits of MINUSTAH in supporting the Haitian people and make a concrete contribution to enabling the rule of law and stability to reign.

The United Nations country team will also play a key role in supporting Haiti in its economic and social development and strengthening its institutions and its respect for human rights. In that regard, Chile welcomes the appointment of Ms. Josette Sheeran as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, and assures her of our support for her important work in designing a comprehensive strategy for implementing the Organization's new approach to combating cholera in Haiti and supporting Haitian efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

We should also mention the importance of continuing to strengthen the Haitian National Police, which has a key role to play in consolidating Haiti's stability. In that regard, we note the campaign launched by the National Police, with the support of MINUSTAH and in cooperation with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Rights, to strengthen the recruitment of women, and we urge the authorities to continue to support women's equal participation in the security sector, as well as in the relevant decision-making bodies.

In conclusion, we reiterate Chile's commitment to the country and the people of Haiti and reaffirm the importance of continuing to support that sisterly nation in its responsibility for its own development. We also acknowledge the work of all the previous Special Representatives. We thank Brazil, which has contributed military personnel during all those

years, as well as all the military, police and civilian personnel of MINUSTAH, and we pay tribute to the memory of those who gave their lives in fulfilling this noble mission.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Giacomelli da Silva (Brazil) (*spoke in French*): I thank France for convening today's debate. I commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Sandra Honoré, for her detailed briefing and reiterate my Government's appreciation for her leadership. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Haiti, Mr. Denis Régis, for his statement.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the efforts of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to support that country's political process over the past 13 years. MINUSTAH has demonstrated the potential that innovative approaches offer and that could serve as a model for future peacekeeping operations elsewhere in the world. Its positive efforts include its coordination between civilian and military personnel on the ground, its community outreach strategies aimed at building trust, and the remarkable role played by women in all areas of the stabilization process.

We would also like to emphasize the importance of tools such as the community-violence reduction programme and the quick-impact projects that have played an important role in supporting the primary objective of stabilization and have been crucial in strengthening the rule of law in Haiti. As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/840), the Mission has implemented 1,788 such quick-impact projects covering areas as wide-ranging as human rights, the rule of law, good governance, the protection of the environment and the supply of drinking water.

The past 13 years have been a unique and unprecedented experience for Brazil, which has served as commander of MINUSTAH's troops and deployed more than 37,000 soldiers to help the Haitian authorities ensure a stable and secure environment for its inhabitants and rebuild the country following various natural disasters. Brazil's commitment throughout the Mission's mandate was affirmed once again by our troops' decision to temporarily reactivate their operations to support Haitians when Hurricane Irma passed through.

Brazil will continue to support a peacekeeping doctrine that truly contributes to the sustaining peace. We are in favour of integrated mandate approaches that promote stabilization, dialogue, reconciliation, development and human rights. We were pleased to see in the report of the Secretary-General that the planning for the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) is well advanced, in line with the parameters set out in resolution 2350 (2017). We commend the smooth transition of tasks from MINUSTAH to MINUJUSTH, the Haitian authorities, the country team and other partners, which required close consultations between the Mission's management team and the local authorities.

We would like to emphasize that among MINUJUSTH's many tasks, developing the police force is very important. Although the capacities of the Haitian National Police have improved, that relatively young institution is still facing considerable challenges. We commend the efforts to fully implement its strategic development plan, particularly the goal of increasing the ratio of the number of police officers to the population, as well as the percentage of women in the police force, and we support the Secretary-General's call to international partners to increase their support for the Government of Haiti's efforts in this area.

We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that further measures are needed to protect and promote women's rights. For example, the role of the Victims' Rights Advocate should be transferred from MINUSTAH to MINUJUSTH in order to address the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse. Sexual violence in peacekeeping operations is a major concern for the United Nations. MINUSTAH has always been very rigorous in dealing with the rare cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, none of which were committed by Brazilian peacekeepers. Brazil reaffirms its commitment to supporting all initiatives aimed at combating such crimes.

We thank the Special Envoy for Haiti for her strategy in the fight against cholera. We take note of the reduction in the number of cases of the disease during the past year. We call on States to redouble their efforts to secure the funds necessary for the implementation of national and international plans aimed at stopping the spread of the disease.

The work of the United Nations in Haiti is not finished. We agree with the Secretary-General's

observation that the success of MINUJUSTH will depend, in large part, on its ability to rapidly establish a relationship of partnership, mutual understanding and cooperation with the Government.

The end of MINUSTAH and the transition to MINUJUSTH represent a step forward in building a culture of peace, but, as stated by the Secretary-General in his report, the security and development of Haiti can be ensured only by the national authorities and the Haitians themselves.

We are paying close attention to recent political developments and call for moderation from all parties at such an important juncture for the country.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Brazil's long-term commitment to and solidarity with Haiti, as well as our confidence in the determination and perseverance of the Haitian people to succeed in their quest for stability, democracy and prosperity.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Jamaica.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): I express sincere appreciation to you, Madam, for having convened this timely public debate on the situation in Haiti. I also express my gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Sandra Honoré, for her comprehensive briefing, as well as for her invaluable contributions to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) throughout her tenure.

Both Haiti and the United Nations have arrived at a pivotal juncture of transition from MINUSTAH to its successor, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH). Jamaica has long recognized the significant role of peacekeeping in the maintenance of international peace and security and appreciates the role that MINUSTAH has played in supporting Haiti since its inception. We recall in particular the vital relief response that MINUSTAH provided in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake. We recognize that the Mission's remit over the years has been wide-ranging, encompassing the critical social, political and developmental needs of Haiti.

As the Secretary-General reported this month, MINUSTAH has recorded many clear accomplishments, such as the implementation of more than 1,700 quick-impact projects, the progress made by the community violence reduction programme in mostly vulnerable and urban areas, the implementation of human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review, and the establishment of committees to oversee the implementation of specific treaties, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. What is of paramount importance at this time, however, is that concerted efforts be made to expand access to justice and that the institutions of the rule of law, including the Haitian national police, be strengthened.

While the range of achievements recorded by MINUSTAH is laudable, now is the time to turn our attention to the consolidation of the gains registered by the Mission over its more than 13 years of operation. We therefore support the international community's commitment to sustaining its active engagement through effective partnership with the Government and the people of Haiti as they proceed on their path towards stabilization and democratic consolidation.

I reiterate Jamaica's strong support for the urgent action that needs to be taken by the international community in order to resolve the health and humanitarian situation caused by the introduction and presence of cholera in Haiti. We recognize that there is no simple solution to this unfortunate situation and appreciate the steps being taken by the United Nations and other partners to address the effects of cholera in Haiti. Jamaica looks forward to the effective implementation of the three-part strategy planned by the United Nations Special Envoy for Haiti, which includes mobilizing funds to address the significant financing deficit that retards the full implementation of the overall response to the critical situation of cholera in Haiti. In that respect, Jamaica was pleased to facilitate, along with Mexico, General Assembly resolution 71/161 B, adopted in July, which called on Member States to voluntarily redirect any unencumbered balances from MINUSTAH to the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

Mindful of ensuring that residual stabilization needs are afforded priority, we urge that attention be placed on addressing issues surrounding justice reform and the promotion of human rights, including the protection and promotion of women's rights. We note that areas of concern include the prolonged periods of pre-trial detention and prison overcrowding.

As MINUSTAH withdraws, Jamaica recognizes the importance of ensuring that the transition period be executed in close cooperation with the United

Nations country team. The aim is to enable a smooth, careful and progressive transfer of assets and duties to MINUJUSTH, the Haitian authorities and other key stakeholders, in alignment with the on-the-ground needs of Haiti. Jamaica concurs with the observation of the Secretary-General that ultimately, the security, political and development agenda of Haiti can be shaped only by the national authorities and the Haitian population.

I reaffirm the Government of Jamaica's long-term commitment to Haiti and its people as they proceed on the path towards sustainable development.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8069

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8069th meeting

Thursday, 12 October 2017, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skau
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I warmly welcome the Secretary-General and give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: Nine months ago, approximately 20 million people were at severe risk of famine in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and north-eastern Nigeria. In South Sudan, almost 100,000 people were on the verge of starvation. At that time, I expressed my deep concern to Member States in two letters calling for urgent action and support for humanitarian and development agencies. I also held a media briefing here in New York on the crisis with the principals of the World Food Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and representatives of from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and UNICEF. In March, I visited Somalia, where I saw at first hand the need for a massive scale-up in international support in order to avert a famine. I heard heartbreaking stories from people who had been forced from their homes by drought, and last month the high-level event on famine during the General Assembly highlighted our continued grave concerns.

The international community responded quickly to the warnings. Donors came forward. Nearly 70 per cent of the funds requested have now been received. Aid operations were scaled up. Humanitarian agencies and their partners are now reaching close to 13 million people each month with life-saving food, nutrition assistance, health care and other support. Development partners have also stepped up by working with humanitarian agencies to link emergency relief with long-term programmes aimed at breaking the cycle of risk and vulnerability. Although we have succeeded in keeping famine at bay, we have not kept suffering at bay. Hunger continues for millions of people. Children under 5 will suffer the mental and physical scars of stunting throughout their whole lives. In fact, in the past nine months, the need for humanitarian aid has increased in those four areas.

The number of people at risk has increased. In South Sudan, approximately 6 million people are severely food-insecure — an increase of 5 million since the beginning of the year. Humanitarian aid is saving lives, but we have not dealt with the one major root cause of those food crises: conflict. Some 80 per cent of the World Food Programme's funding is going to areas affected by armed conflict. Approximately 60 per cent of the 815 million people suffering from hunger today live in the shadow of conflict. Three quarters of the children whose growth has been stunted live in countries affected by conflict. Until those conflicts are resolved and development takes root, communities and entire regions will continue to be ravaged by hunger and suffering.

Let us talk about each of those food crises individually. In north-east Nigeria, some 8.5 million people are now in need of humanitarian aid. There have been tangible improvements in food security in some areas, thanks to the efforts of the Government and humanitarian organizations. However, aid agencies face obstacles because of ongoing attacks by Boko Haram, while operations by the Nigerian military also affect access. We believe that up to 700,000 people in parts of Borno and Yobe states are completely inaccessible and may require urgent support. Two thirds of the health-care facilities in those states have been damaged. Those that are functioning are short of staff and lack safe water, basic drugs and equipment. That poses very serious challenges in dealing with outbreaks of cholera, malaria and measles.

In Somalia, more than 6 million people depend on humanitarian aid for their survival. Aid agencies and their partners face armed conflict, insecurity, blocked roads and unnecessary bureaucracy. Four aid workers were killed in the first eight months of this year, and there were more than 100 violent incidents affecting aid organizations. Large parts of southern and central Somalia remain under the control or influence of Al-Shabaab. Almost 1.9 million people who need help are beyond the reach of aid agencies. Road access is severely limited by illegal checkpoints and blockades. Al-Shabaab and other non-State armed groups have been targeting humanitarians and confiscating or destroying aid supplies. Meanwhile, the Government frequently imposes bureaucratic obstacles, which include arbitrary taxation and interference in recruitment and the awarding of contracts.

In South Sudan, localized famine has been averted, but severe food insecurity has risen to unprecedented levels. Government and opposition groups are preventing agencies from accessing areas in urgent need, including parts of the Equatorias and the Greater Upper Nile region, and areas to the south and west of Wau. Nineteen aid workers have been killed since January, and more than 440 have had to be relocated. Humanitarian supplies are being regularly looted from convoys and compounds. More than 830 incidents relating to access have been reported this year, more than half of which involved violence against humanitarian agencies. That amounts to more than one such incident against humanitarians per day. Both Government and opposition forces are implicated. The collapse of the economy has led to widespread violence and increased criminality, thereby making the delivery of food aid even more dangerous.

In Yemen, the World Food Programme and its partners helped avert famine by reaching 7 million people in August — an increase of more than 60 per cent since the first half of this year, but many millions of people continue to suffer. Approximately 700,000 people in areas of the Sa'ada, Hajjah, Al Hudaydah and Taizz governorates are hard to reach because of bureaucratic obstacles, air strikes, shelling and ground clashes. Both the alliance of those loyal to Abdulmalik al-Houthi and Ali Abdullah Saleh, which controls the capital, Sana'a, and the Government of Yemen have imposed restrictions on the movement and transportation of humanitarian personnel and aid. An economic blockade has led to an increase in fuel costs of more than 50 per cent and in food costs by 30 per cent over pre-crisis levels. Meanwhile, the world's largest cholera epidemic has resulted in some 800,000 suspected cases and more than 2,000 deaths.

The parties to conflict in all four of those countries have stated their commitment to humanitarian law and human rights law, but most of them have not followed through. I call on them and those with influence over them to translate that commitment into practical measures and to address impunity immediately. That means allowing and facilitating the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief, imposing constraints only in good faith, and respecting and protecting humanitarian personnel and supplies.

I also call for urgent measures to address the root causes of conflict, improve access and mitigate human suffering. Specifically, I ask the Council to continue to engage in and support the political process in Somalia, and encourage the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states to stabilize their relationship. Worryingly, we can see that that process is not going as smoothly as we would like. Without progress in the political and security areas, any improvements in the humanitarian situation will be only temporary.

It is critical to clarify key issues defining the federal states, including the division of powers and agreements on revenue and resource-sharing between the federal and state Governments. I welcome the efforts by the Government and several federal states to improve access by unblocking routes and removing illegal checkpoints, and I call for continued progress on that issue. In Nigeria, I encourage the Government and its counterparts in the Lake Chad Basin region to develop a regional strategy to address the root causes of the crisis there.

I urge all partners to step up efforts to provide humanitarian aid, as well as long-term solutions for sustainable development. It is critical that a greater civilian presence be established in the newly accessible areas, and I welcome the Government's efforts to achieve that. In Yemen, we face increasing constraints and interference by the alliance of Houthis and Ali Abdullah Saleh, which controls Sana'a, as the Government of Yemen and its partners from the coalition led by Saudi Arabia attempt to restore legitimacy. I call on all parties to ensure unhindered access to people in need. I repeat the call for the payment of civil servants' salaries and the effective and continued operation of the port of Al Hudaydah. What is needed most is for the parties to return to the negotiation table and focus on reaching agreement. Member States with influence on them must also play their role.

Finally, I urge the parties to the conflict in South Sudan to come to terms urgently, so as to prevent increased food insecurity and refugee movements, which threaten to destabilize the region, and continued human suffering and misery. I encourage all Member States to support the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's high-level revitalization forum, which has gained momentum in recent weeks. I urge the Government to facilitate access to people in need, to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers and supplies, and to remove bureaucratic impediments to aid.

Last month, the United Nations food and nutrition agencies released a report entitled *The State of Food*

Security and Nutrition in the World. The report underlined that we are now seeing a reversal in the long-term decline in hunger. Conflict and violations of international humanitarian law inevitably increase vulnerability to all kinds of threats, including food insecurity, which in turn causes people to flee. The World Food Programme estimates that a 1 per cent increase in food insecurity leads to a 2 per cent increase in refugees.

Conflict in one country places demands on its neighbours to provide food and basic services to refugees. That can lead to further instability, affecting the security of an entire region and beyond. Prevention must, as always, be our watchword. Early famine-warning mechanisms have worked well in north-eastern Nigeria, Yemen, Somalia and South Sudan. We will continue to support famine prevention and humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian aid and strengthened respect for international law must be complemented by investment in sustainable peace and comprehensive long-term solutions.

Those countries are dealing with violent extremism at the same time as they are being hit by economic recession and low oil prices. They present powerful examples of the complex and multidimensional challenges that we face. They require a system-wide approach that addresses the humanitarian-development nexus and its link to peace. Development agencies must engage early on with innovative solutions. The World Bank has shown that it is possible to scale up development-oriented programmes, complementing the humanitarian response, even in fragile countries like Yemen. I welcome those efforts, which must include the involvement of regional neighbours and front-line States.

In the long term, we must focus on what communities and countries need in order to emerge from protracted conflict and instability. We must help people not only to survive, but also to thrive. Right now, we must urgently commit to increasing humanitarian aid and funding the programmes that we have in place. Wherever we have not prevented or resolved conflict, we must support its victims and survivors. It is unconscionable that aid agencies must make life-or-death decisions about who should receive aid, owing to a shortage of resources. I am grateful for the solidarity shown and urge continued commitment and support.

Mr. Skau (Sweden): I would like to join you, Mr. President, in welcoming the Secretary-General to the Security Council today for this important briefing, and thank him for his sobering and comprehensive briefing. The Secretary-General's call for action in February should not have been necessary. However, by giving his voice to some of the most vulnerable people in our world, he may have made it possible to avoid a humanitarian disaster of massive proportions. His early warning to the Council, asking for our support in addressing an acute risk of famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-eastern Nigeria, triggered the early action needed to prevent a catastrophe.

That type of interaction between the Council and the Secretary-General, with prevention at its heart, presents a model for the future, particularly as humanitarian crises are increasingly being driven by conflict. The Council's presidential statement, proposed by Sweden and others, makes it clear that ongoing conflicts and violence are having devastating humanitarian consequences. Moreover, those conflicts are, at the same time, hindering an effective humanitarian response, leading to shocking levels of human suffering, including famine, in those situations. That is a worrying trend.

The Secretary-General's consistent leadership and advocacy for the humanitarian and longer-term response to the threat of famine has been invaluable. Since his call to action, the international community has mobilized, and humanitarian efforts have been scaled up in all four countries. Yet, as was pointed out today, much is still needed. I would like to make three points this afternoon on the response so far and what more can be done.

First, I pay tribute to the women and men of local communities who have been at the forefront of the response to those crises. I also pay tribute to the humanitarian workers, who risk their lives to save others. They must receive our full support. We are appalled by the lack of humanitarian access and continuing attacks on humanitarians, as well as on hospitals, clinics and medical personnel. That is unacceptable and endangers the lives of humanitarians, as well as undermining their ability to save the lives of others. As has been stressed by the Council before, the full respect by all parties for international humanitarian law is essential.

We welcome the generous response from international donors to the Secretary-General's

call to action. Ambitious commitments have been made by donors at successive donor conferences in Oslo, London and Geneva. Sweden, for its part, has supported the response in the four countries with more than $131 million in bilateral humanitarian assistance. The flexible and time-critical humanitarian funding available from the Central Emergency Response Fund, which has so far allocated $118 million, has also been particularly important in kick-starting the humanitarian response.

As the Secretary-General said last month, keeping famine at bay does not mean keeping suffering at bay. For that reason, we welcome the strengthened engagement by development actors as part of a more comprehensive response that seeks to build long-term resilience. We also welcome the renewed, deepening and active partnership between the United Nations and the World Bank, which is an essential part of the work to break the cycle of vulnerability, need and humanitarian response.

Secondly, while we can rightly welcome the response to the Secretary-General's call to action, we must also recognize that we have failed collectively by allowing those crises to develop to their current level on our watch. Widespread food insecurity, as well as the risk of famine, remains in those four countries, as well as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and, sadly, in an unacceptable number of other places. What those crises have in common is that they are not accidents or natural disasters but man-made catastrophes, driven by conflicts and violence. Yes, we need more funding; yes, we need more access; but that will not end those crises or stop new ones from emerging. There must be political solutions to the conflicts that are driving those entirely preventable humanitarian crises, exponentially increasing the needs and suffering that make a robust humanitarian and longer-term response so much harder. Ending such conflicts also means tackling the root causes that are driving them, including underdevelopment, inequality and exclusion, which are, in turn, exacerbated by the effects of climate change. We need to make, build and sustain peace. We all have a role to play in such longer-term response strategies — as host communities, Governments, regional partners, humanitarian donors and members of the Council.

Lastly, Sweden took the initiative of proposing a presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/14) on the risk of famine in those four contexts and the humanitarian response. We did so because we believed that it was important to ensure that the full weight of the Security Council was behind the Secretary-General's call to action. The issue of how conflicts are driving humanitarian crises and preventing the humanitarian community from responding is not unique to the four countries addressed in the presidential statement. Delivering essential humanitarian assistance to those most in need is a challenge that humanitarian agencies are increasingly faced with as they seek to carry out their lifesaving work.

The Security Council has a role to play in ensuring that those agencies can do their job when a conflict with devastating humanitarian consequences, a conflict that hinders an effective humanitarian response, creates the risk of an outbreak of famine. We are ready to continue to lead on humanitarian issues in complex emergencies during the remainder of our term on the Council and to work with present and future members to explore further Council action. In that regard, and as a first step, we will welcome an update from the Secretary-General in early 2018 on where we stand in relation to the challenges that have been outlined today, on any lessons learned that could be applied more broadly and on what further support is needed from the Council to address those challenges and prevent further suffering. We are committed to standing with the Secretary-General in those efforts.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. Eight months ago he issued an urgent wake-up call to the world as the threat of famine and the threat of millions starving to death loomed large over the people of Somalia, South Sudan, north-eastern Nigeria and Yemen. Today, thanks to his call to action and the global efforts that followed, famine has been kept at bay. And yet that is no cause for celebration. As the Secretary-General said in his briefing, the absence of famine is not the absence of need. Hunger by any other name is still hunger. In each of the countries I just mentioned, the need remains colossal — overwhelming, in fact — and even greater than it was in February.

In Somalia, more than 3 million people are going to bed hungry. The same can be said for more than 5 million in north-eastern Nigeria. In South Sudan, there are literally more people without food than with. More than half of the population — more than 6 million people — are severely food insecure. And in Yemen, as we heard earlier this week, more than 17 million people

are now food insecure, nearly 7 million of whom are just one step away from famine.

If only to deepen the tragedy further, in all four of those countries the impact falls most acutely on women, girls and children. As the Council well knows, the long-term solution to all those crises is ending and preventing conflict, but long-term fixes alone are no good when hunger kills in the short-term. We need aid to reach people in need quickly, and as the Council, we need to find the political will necessary to overcome the barriers that too often prevent that from happening. We need only look to South Sudan, where fighters from each side accuse civilians of feeding or being fed by the enemy. Access restrictions, bureaucratic impediments and attacks on humanitarian workers continue to delay the delivery of lifesaving assistance, with more than 1,600 access incidents reported since the start of 2016 — that is, the delivery of food being denied to those most in need, at least twice a day, for nearly two years.

In north-east Nigeria it is a similar story, with aid agencies unable to access many of those in need due to continuing fighting between Boko Haram and Government forces. As a priority, the Government of Nigeria must protect civilians and provide unimpeded humanitarian access. In parallel, the Government should set out clear steps for ending the conflict that do not depend on military measures alone. Sustainable peace can only be achieved by addressing the root causes of the violence.

In Yemen, the gravest humanitarian situation today, food is the biggest weapon and lack of food is the biggest killer. The Council is being very clear this week about the need for increased commercial and humanitarian access into and across Yemen, including through increased capacity at all Yemeni ports, particularly Al Hudaydah. We also need to see public-sector salaries paid regularly across the country, starting with the health, water, sanitation and waste-management sectors to stem cholera and preserve essential Government services.

It is only in Somalia that drought is partially responsible for the situation. Even there, the war remains the principal trigger of and contributor to the unfolding humanitarian tragedy. Access restrictions are again a central cause of the crisis, with impediments to the delivery of humanitarian assistance at the federal and state levels, as well as hefty, illicit fees that limit reach and increase delivery costs.

In conclusion, what we are witnessing in all of those countries is the return of hunger as a weapon of war. The destruction of farms, livestock herds and markets, the blocks on humanitarian aid and access for commercial goods are all deliberate tactics to decrease people's access to adequate nutrition and health care. We need to recognize that it is happening as a result of political decisions. So in turn, the Council must bring its own political pressure to bear on those responsible and hold them to account. We have the power and duty to influence their behaviour in the right direction. It is time to say that enough is enough.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. We appreciate his leadership and voice in raising the alarm about the nations on the verge of famine today. The humanitarian needs in north-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen are unprecedented. Those countries are experiencing what is being called the most vicious of vicious spirals, where conflict compounds food and health-care shortages, which in turn compound the risk of disease. All four countries are experiencing devastating cholera outbreaks. The plagues seem to come one after the other, but they are not the result of the wrath of God but of the acts of men. In too many cases, they are the acts of leaders who are more interested in power or personal gain than the safety and security of their own people.

In August, the Council acknowledged that unfortunate reality when we declared that famine is an issue of international peace and security (S/PRST/2017/14). Those conflicts threaten us all. People without access to food, water, basic services and economic opportunities are more likely to turn to armed and extremist groups. Epidemics, like cholera, can spread across borders. It is not a drought or some other natural disaster that has caused the largest food-security emergency since the Second World War. The main reason that there is a risk of famine in Yemen, South Sudan, north-east Nigeria and Somalia is that fighters are not letting food get to those who need it. In some cases there are reports that warring parties are trying to starve entire communities into submission. That is horrifying and demands the Council's full and immediate attention.

Many have responded to the urgent need for assistance in these four countries. At the opening of

the General Assembly, the United States announced more than $575 million in additional aid, bringing our total contribution to populations affected by this crisis to more than $2.4 billion in 2017. We urge all States Members of the United Nations to join us and do their part. But more funding, however necessary, will not be enough. In most cases, access to desperate people is the key problem. Food aid may be available, but the assistance cannot be delivered to those in need. That is especially true in South Sudan, Nigeria and Yemen. In South Sudan, a massive humanitarian response helped to roll back famine earlier this summer, but the pervasive conflict in South Sudan has left half the population facing life-threatening hunger.

Armed groups and bureaucratic impediments frequently prevent or delay the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and attacks on aid workers are increasing at an alarming rate. Since 2013, 85 humanitarian workers have been killed in South Sudan alone — 18 were killed this year. In Yemen, the people are simultaneously facing the world's worst cholera outbreak and the world's largest food-security emergency. Like elsewhere, women and children are suffering the most. There is no military solution in Yemen. A lasting end to the violence will come only through a comprehensive political agreement. But the humanitarian needs in Yemen will not wait for a political process. All sides must do everything in their power to alleviate the suffering of civilians in Yemen.

There are practical steps that can be taken now, today, to facilitate the delivery of food, fuel and medicine to desperate people. These steps begin with increasing capacity for aid delivery and allowing humanitarian access in all of Yemen. In Nigeria, as well, attacks by Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant continue to prevent aid from being delivered. The United States is fully committed to working with our Nigerian partners to defeat terrorists, but the needs of the 5.2 million suffering Nigerians must be addressed. The Nigerian Government must do more to streamline assistance deliveries and allow humanitarian workers to reach all civilians in need. In Somalia, unprecedented donor contributions and the effective leadership of the Federal Government of Somalia have helped avert famine thus far, but the threat persists. There too, terrorists and other armed groups impede the humanitarian response.

In each of those four countries, avoiding famine means making sure that aid can be delivered to the hungry. There is no excuse for a delay. All members of the Council and the international community must come together to hold all actors on the ground accountable. When they block aid, we have to call them out. When they do not allow the safe passage of humanitarian workers, we have to insist that aid workers can operate without fear for their safety and can access all populations in need.

The job of the Council is the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and human rights. Famine prevention is an important part of our mandate. Famine is both the result of the breakdown in peace, security and human rights, and the contributor to further violence and insecurity. We request the Council's sustained attention to this good and necessary work. We asked that we not stop at words and donations alone. Let us go one step further to hold those preventing access accountable for their crimes.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The Senegalese delegation thanks the French presidency for the holding of this important meeting on the issue of famine, which requires a coordinated, effective, lasting or even definitive international response.

Let me also thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his important briefing and for his ongoing decisive efforts to mobilize the international community to fight famine.

In addition to costing millions of people their lives, famine foments social instability and perpetuates the vicious circle of poverty and aid dependency. What is worse, in situations of conflict, it dangerously increases the vulnerability of the populations affected, especially children, women and the elderly.

That is no doubt why, at the beginning of the year, the Secretary-General rightly sounded the alarm, so as to draw the attention of all Member States to the plight of the millions of people threatened by famine in several countries, including in north-east Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia and Yemen, to name only the most urgent and concerning cases; a total of 20 million people are at risk.

This humanitarian crisis, possibly the worst since the end of the Second World War — as the then Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs pointed out during his briefing to the Security Council last March (see S/PV.7897) — could get even worse if we do not act

quickly, especially in terms of access, the mobilization of funds and sustainable political solutions.

In Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and the north-east part of Nigeria, the challenges to humanitarian action are primarily linked to difficulties in accessing people in need and to conflict-related insecurity. That is why we reiterate our call on all parties to those conflicts to comply with international humanitarian law, by which they are bound to ensure the protection of civilians, including their property, as well as of civilian infrastructure, and to allow full and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance.

Moreover, the response to the crisis requires immediate, adequate and easily mobilized funding. In that regard, we welcome the fact that more than 60 per cent of the $4.9 billion needed to respond urgently to the identified needs in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and north-eastern Nigeria has been secured. We encourage more contributions from both States and the private sector so as to enable the full implementation of existing assistance programmes, including the humanitarian response plans developed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

At the beginning of my statement, I spoke of the need for a lasting or even definitive response to the famine crisis, as my delegation is convinced that the world has the necessary resources, capacity and means to permanently eradicate hunger and the spectre of starvation in the world, once and for all.

Moreover, the impact of any alternative approach, even if based on immediate and unhindered access, adequate and available funding and a quicker and more robust mobilization of humanitarian and development actors, would of necessity be limited in terms of time and space.

Additionally, since conflicts are the cause of many cases of famine, the Security Council, as the principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, must use all means at its disposal to engage the parties involved in good faith in the quest for political solutions. In our view, it is the only way to put a lasting end to the suffering of peoples.

Senegal is convinced of the virtues of prevention. As such, it calls for reliable and rigorous warning systems that are based on honest cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, in particular regional and subregional organizations, in order to prevent, to the extent possible, the outbreak of conflict. My delegation also deems it key that we work to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to solve economic, social and cultural problems.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the commitment of Senegal to sparing no effort to ensure a successful international mobilization. In addition to the tribute I paid earlier to the Secretary-General for his dedicated actions, I would like also to extend my gratitude to all organizations and to all stakeholders in general — whether within the United Nations or within non-governmental organizations — that participate in the humanitarian sphere to help the millions of crisis victims.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): We thank Secretary-General Guterres for his very insightful briefing on the stark and painful reality of the suffering caused by the risk of famine in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and north-eastern Nigeria. In line with the presidential statement on famine adopted in early August (S/PRST/2017/14), we commend the Secretary-General for his bold and timely call for the world community to respond to those threats.

At the same time, we acknowledge with deep appreciation the unfailing efforts of United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations to alleviate the large-scale catastrophes that are affecting more than 20 million people in those countries. Yet despite those efforts, the statistics we have heard today are shocking and should awaken us to the realization that what we are witnessing is now at its worst since the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations itself.

While as Council members we express our grave concern, we must go beyond expressions of solidarity and immediately address the problem with workable strategies. One of the major reasons for famine in the countries under discussion is that they are all affected by ongoing armed conflicts and violence, which interfere with people's livelihoods and access to markets and create widespread displacement, further aggravated by climate change. It is clear that military solutions can never be an option, because they only exacerbate tensions, leading to more tragedies and food insecurity. Furthermore, it is obvious that unemployment, poverty, underdevelopment and the unsustainable use of land and water and exploitation of natural resources will further escalate the potential for widespread famine.

The interconnected nature of today's humanitarian crises and the importance of strengthening the security-development nexus were clearly visible during the Council's visit to the Lake Chad basin region in March and will no doubt be confirmed during its upcoming visit to the Sahel region next week. It is clear that the response to famine requires strength and connectivity between political solutions and long-term development strategies. Humanitarian crises require billions of dollars, and there are deficits in the delivery on pledges. Our calls for more funding to breach the shortfalls are often futile, despite the best intentions and political will of Member States, owing to competing claims all over the world. It is therefore vital to harness international assistance with the funds received in order to boost resilience and overcome the divide between the humanitarian and development investments.

Our target should be ensuring food security and the protection of rural livelihoods and investments in agriculture, livestock and indigenous means. All of that plays a role in peacemaking — as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has stated — and will help to reduce tensions, especially where food supplies and markets are severely strained. Food security and agriculture should therefore be supported across conflict cycles as well as during sustained peace.

It has also been shown that supporting livelihoods is the best defence in the effort to protect and save lives, foster recovery and strengthen resilience. We should therefore think creatively about the provision of seeds, cash payments, rapid-response kits, treatment and vaccinations to protect livestock and prevent disease outbreaks, and about training community-based workers. Livelihood projects can be a good basis for bringing people together and facilitating local peace processes through community groups. In each of the countries that we are focusing on, we could develop schemes such as cash for work and nutrition and input vouchers.

As the same time, full, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access is essential; hence the need for inclusive dialogue with all parties to the conflict so as to eliminate all obstacles preventing aid from being delivered to vulnerable populations. That is a process to be engaged in by the entire United Nations system and its peacekeeping missions and country teams in particular, working alongside Governments and armed groups. We should also seek the support of neighbouring countries and regional organizations and their mechanisms for timely intervention, along with donors, partners and, above all, civil society and local populations. Besides working to ensure the implementation of peace agreements, we must aim to make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable so as to reduce rural poverty and enable inclusive and efficient food systems, thereby increasing the resilience of human lives.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing. Since the beginning of this year, some countries and regions in Africa and West Asia have been suffering severe food shortages and even famine as a result of drought and climate change. Secretary-General Guterres has issued an emergency humanitarian-assistance appeal urging the international community to provide relief to the affected countries. China highly appreciates his initiative and the efforts of the relevant United Nations agencies to alleviate their pain and risk. The Chinese Government is sympathetic to the plight of these countries and their peoples, and has been delivering rapid emergency food assistance through bilateral and multilateral channels to Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia and Yemen in the amount of ¥190 million, or about $27 million.

The famine and serious humanitarian situations in the countries and regions concerned have improved considerably thanks to the energetic efforts of the international community, but the risks remain, and there is still a considerable shortfall in humanitarian resources. The international community should continue to provide them with the necessary help. First of all, China would like to stress that attention should be given to helping the countries concerned achieve development. Because of inadequate economic and social development, many developing countries are vulnerable in the face of natural disasters such as drought and famine, which in turn have a negative impact on their domestic peace and security. The United Nations should continue to increase its contribution to these countries' development, advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and help the countries concerned accelerate their economic and social development. That will help to eliminate the causes of conflicts and promote sustainable peace through sustainable development.

Secondly, the various United Nations entities should conduct their work according to their mandates and

improve their division of labour and cooperation. As the organ with primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council should focus on helping the countries and regions concerned address issues of peace and security. On that basis, it should play an active role in coordinating and enhancing communication and cooperation with other United Nations agencies and relevant international organizations working in areas such as development, humanitarian relief and children's issues. Particular attention should be paid to fully leveraging the positive role of regional and subregional organizations and thereby forging synergies within the international community in addressing various problems.

Thirdly, we call on the international community to uphold the concept of community and the common destiny of mankind by continuing to respond to the Secretary-General's appeal to provide humanitarian assistance to the countries and regions concerned. At the same time, we must uphold the principle of country ownership, taking into consideration the practical needs, level of development and priorities of the countries in question. Formulating targeted assistance programmes with a focus on helping the affected countries improve their capacities with regard to food production, storage, transportation and reprocessing, as well as ensuring better nutrition for children, will enhance the countries' capacity to generate their own food while we support them with emergency sustenance.

China stands ready to work jointly with the rest of the international community to help the affected countries and peoples surmount this difficult time and contribute to achieving world peace, security and sustainable development.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We thank the Secretary-General for his briefing today on the humanitarian situation in the four areas under discussion and for his personal leadership in the efforts to respond to the crisis. We have been discussing the humanitarian situation in each of these countries separately, but today's briefing gives us the opportunity to have a comprehensive look at the unprecedented level of the humanitarian needs and threat of famine facing Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-eastern Nigeria, which requires a global response. Unless the international community takes urgent and concerted action, millions of lives will be in grave danger. Of course, we realize that the underlying causes and the gravity of the situation are not the same in all of these areas. We therefore believe that the humanitarian response should be tailored to fit the particularities of each situation.

One thing that could be an element common to all four situations is the devastating impact of climate change. That, coupled with the ongoing conflicts and violence in the four areas, has left many people on the brink of famine. That kind of trend — a conflict-exacerbating, climate-induced humanitarian crisis — poses serious threats to global peace and security and to development agendas. That is why it requires concerted and urgent global action. Mobilizing the necessary support to deliver lifesaving assistance to those in need in the short term and investing to build resilience in the long term are therefore extremely critical.

Moreover, ensuring safe and sustained humanitarian access so as to facilitate the delivery and assistance of aid, and ending armed violence through comprehensive political dialogue, is crucial, since there is only so much that humanitarian assistance can achieve in the absence of peace and security. In that regard, we would like to stress the importance of ensuring the safety and security of humanitarian operations and personnel. Humanitarian actors face enormous challenges, including risks to their own lives as they provide support to people in need. Ensuring safe, timely and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance is extremely important for the provision of an effective humanitarian response, and all parties to the various conflicts should be called on to cooperate in that regard.

While appreciating what the international community has been done so far to reach out to those in need of urgent assistance and avert a humanitarian catastrophe, we realize that a lot more remains to be done. There is an urgent need to step up efforts to provide humanitarian assistance in order to save lives and support the people of Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and north-eastern Nigeria. The funding gap in all four of those areas is huge, and we call on the international community to provide additional resources and find funds for the relief efforts. It is also important to ensure that the commitments and pledges that have been made in various international forums are honoured and fulfilled.

Finally, we appreciate the efforts undertaken by the United Nations and its humanitarian partners in extremely difficult circumstances. We remain ready to support the Secretary-General's call for action to avert famine in conflict-affected countries, and encourage

him to continue to provide early warnings when a conflict that is producing devastating humanitarian consequences and hindering an effective humanitarian response also runs the risk of leading to an outbreak of famine.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank the Secretary-General for his presence and his briefing, especially for the clarity of his message and proposal.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-eastern Nigeria is certainly alarming. The crises in those regions are concentrated in fragile communities that are experiencing serious conflicts or are threatened by terrorist groups, and in areas that are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Let us be clear. The world produces more than enough food to meet the needs of its entire population. It is the actions of humans that result in such unprecedented humanitarian crises, through armed conflicts that displace populations and the destruction of productive infrastructure and food-distribution channels.

We must act urgently to respond to the grave humanitarian situation in Somalia, which has been exacerbated by years of conflict and insecurity that have the potential to derail the country's political development and the legitimacy of Federal and state institutions. We should redouble our coordinated efforts to meet immediate needs and strengthen future resilience.

With regard to Yemen, the violence produced by the armed conflict and the paralysis in the peace process are causing great suffering to Yemeni civilians. With each passing day, that suffering further jeopardizes the country's humanitarian situation, which is on the brink of collapse, aggravated by famine, the spread of cholera and difficulties in delivering aid. The three years of conflict in Yemen have led to a catastrophic humanitarian situation and the world's most serious food-security crisis. Millions of people need assistance, in the form of food, water and medicine, to survive.

It is the civilians who are paying the highest price for this war, as they lose their lives. Ending the suffering caused by such man-made crises is possible, but it will only happen when the parties return to the negotiating table — without preconditions and in good faith — and agree to put an end to the armed conflict. Recalling the provisions of resolution 2286 (2016), we emphasize that aerial attacks on schools and hospitals, where the most vulnerable, innocent civilians are to be found, are despicable and unacceptable. We reiterate once again that the rebels in Yemen do not control its airspace, which means that those bloody attacks are being perpetrated by other forces. Sadly, when such attacks are carried out, we are putting the future of the whole of Yemeni society, especially children, in jeopardy. The widespread violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law that all the warring parties have committed are unfortunately now common currency in Yemen.

With regard to the crisis in South Sudan, Mr. Stephen O'Brien, the former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, told the Council in March (see S/PV.7897) that the famine that the people of South Sudan are enduring is man-made. Those who are inciting and perpetuating the conflict there are complicit in the people's starvation.

There is a multidimensional crisis in north-eastern Nigeria, with many factors sowing seeds of instability in the region. In an area whose economy is dependent on agricultural activity and where 5 million people are suffering from food insecurity, climate change, drought and the terrorist threat presented by Boko Haram are wreaking ever greater havoc.

We have said that these situations are man-made. It is therefore also up to humankind — all of us — to bring an end to that suffering, identify those responsible and make sure that they are held accountable for their actions.

If I may, I would like to point out that another victim of these horrors, besides the innocent civilians suffering from famine around the world, is our own consciousness. I would ask my colleagues to think about the words that we use to talk about this situation. We have become used to antiseptic euphemisms that protect us from harsh realities. Today we often talk about food insecurity. What that actually means is that there is no food. We often talk about severe food insecurity. What that actually means is that there are people who on the verge of famine. Or we say that people are enduring livelihood crises. What we are really saying is that they do not have the most minimal amount of food that a person needs to survive. I believe we must stop being indifferent to such perversities.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing and his

outstanding commitment to addressing the issue at hand.

The unprecedented level of global humanitarian needs, exemplified by the food crises that more than 20 million people are facing in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-eastern Nigeria, is an urgent problem. The conflicts and violence in those countries present both short- and long-term obstacles to an effective humanitarian response and as a result represent the main drivers of hunger.

The situation in Yemen is especially alarming. Millions of people there are facing a triple threat of food shortages, cholera and violence. Fifteen million lack adequate access to clean water, sanitation, hygiene and health services, and 7 million are at risk of famine. Ukraine commends the United Nations and other humanitarian actors for delivering lifesaving assistance to the Yemeni people, and we especially appreciate the efforts of the World Food Programme, which provided aid to 7 million people in August alone. We urge the parties to ensure the sustainable delivery of commercial and humanitarian supplies.

We are no less concerned about the plight of the millions of Somalis who are in need of assistance owing to malnutrition and food insecurity, armed conflict and climate issues. As a result, nearly half of the population, most of them women and children, require humanitarian assistance, and not just with food; even water has become a luxury for more than 4.5 million people.

Ukraine commends humanitarian actors' collective efforts to ease the famine conditions in South Sudan, but, with a record-high 1.7 million people still on the brink of famine, that does not mean that the food insecurity there is over.

North-eastern Nigeria is another example of acute food insecurity. During the Security Council's visit to the Lake Chad basin, we saw that challenge at first hand, together with its complex root causes, which include aspects related to security, terrorism, climate change and development.

The single biggest factor depriving local populations of access to even the most basic needs is violence. In other words, the current hunger crises unfolding before our eyes are, above all, man-made, which means that they would be fully preventable if it were not for the irresponsible actions of human beings. In the light of that fact, we welcome and fully support the joint efforts of the Security Council and the Secretary-General to pursue every possible way to end the conflicts in these countries, including by addressing their underlying root causes comprehensively and sustainably. At the same time, we deplore the fact that in the conflict-afflicted countries of Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and north-eastern Nigeria, the parties to those conflicts have all too often failed to ensure unfettered and sustained access for deliveries of vital food assistance and other forms of humanitarian aid. We call on all the parties to armed conflicts to respect and protect civilians. It is also important to recall that the obligation to uphold international humanitarian law applies not only to direct participants in conflicts but also to those who have influence on them. Another imperative is the security of humanitarian personnel in conflict-affected countries. We therefore call on all parties to respect and protect medical and educational facilities and personnel.

Ukraine highly appreciates the efforts of the international community aimed at the long-term recovery and resilience of the countries in question. Ukraine stands ready to contribute to that vital endeavour with the goal of keeping famine and human suffering at bay.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): I join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his briefing and for his commitment to resolving such critical issues as the famines in the four countries under discussion.

Italy remains deeply concerned about the devastating levels of extremism, instability, violence and conflict that currently exist around the world and have resulted in famine conditions and starvation chiefly in four regions — South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and north-eastern Nigeria — thereby affecting more than 20 million people. Let us say it clearly. This is perhaps the largest humanitarian crisis that the world has ever witnessed, with a particularly devastating impact on the most vulnerable, including women, children and persons with disabilities.

Since we last discussed those issues in the Security Council — in the Arria-formula meeting that Italy organized with other partners in June and in the presidential statement adopted in August (S/PRST/2017/14) — the situation has not improved. On the contrary, despite the fact that the famine in South Sudan has been contained, the number of people suffering from food insecurity has reached a record

of more than 800 million around the world. There is therefore no more time to lose if we wish to prevent the worst effects of such crises and counter those that are already going on. Italy has always believed in the importance of a consolidated and multidimensional approach to such issues.

First, it is clear that these famines are the result of man-made, conflict-driven crises. However, as we have long advocated, we believe that we should also pay attention to the fact that the relationship between conflict and food insecurity functions in both directions. We have to realize that food insecurity can fuel even more violence, prolong conflicts and bring about the displacement of peoples. In particular, its role as a root cause of forced migration was recently highlighted in the World Food Programme report entitled "At the root of exodus: Food security, conflict and international migration". In that regard, we must step up our efforts to strengthen the resilience of agriculture and food systems at risk, so as to render them less vulnerable to possible future shocks, honouring the commitment that we made last May at the Taormina summit under Italy's presidency of the Group of Seven. In that regard, I also want to recall the seminar that we held last week in Rome on conflicts and hunger, organized by Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme, which was one part of a three-part cycle of seminars aiming at highlighting the link between conflicts and food security as key to tackling those issues in a holistic and effective way.

Secondly, in terms of methodology, we are convinced of the importance of ensuring the Council's backing and engagement on these issues, through early-warning mechanisms and real action, so that we can break the cycle of violence and ensure full humanitarian access and the immediate disbursement of pledged funds. In the specific case of these four famines, I would like to pay tribute to the spirit of initiative and leadership shown by the Secretary-General, who exercised his function of providing early warning to the Council in his February and June letters. If we have been able to provide some effective and timely responses to the ongoing crises, we owe a great deal of that to his initiative.

Thirdly, from a broader perspective, Italy believes that the Security Council's growing commitment this year to humanitarian issues is heading in the right direction, as it clearly falls within its mandate, given the wide-ranging implications of those issues for international peace and security. We must take a holistic approach when dealing with peace and security issues, and we therefore encourage members to keep those issues high on the Council's agenda. That should also be the case in the future, with another possible update to the Council by the Secretary-General coming in the next few months.

Finally, I want to conclude with a thought I had while I on my way to the meeting this afternoon. As I was looking around at the city of New York, after an excellent lunch, I was thinking that we were going to come to this Chamber to talk about famine and hunger. It felt like one of those wake-up calls that we who work here in the Council sometimes have. It is true that we discuss many crises here, but at the end of the day, this is one area where we really can make a difference.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, we would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his important briefing today. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank him for his personal commitment and his resolute action on this front.

The increase in food insecurity and the risk of famine in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and north-eastern Nigeria is worrying not only because the lives of more than 30 million people are at risk, according to figures from the Food and Agriculture Organization, but also because that humanitarian crisis is the result in great part of ongoing armed conflicts and human-generated violence, the consequences of which have an impact on the lives and rights of millions trapped in the middle of those conflicts.

Tragically, the number of victims and other people who have left their homes and livelihoods in droves to escape violence has given rise to an alarming number of forcibly displaced persons — more than 65 million around the world, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. That constant flow of the forcibly displaced has clearly resulted in a cessation of agricultural and productive activities on the one hand, affecting sustainable basic food supplies, and, on the other, severe restrictions on those supplies, producing skyrocketing prices of foodstuffs in local markets. In several cases, the situation has been aggravated by the fact that the parties to the conflicts impose restrictions on the transit routes, ports and airports where imported food as well as other forms of

humanitarian assistance enter those countries to meet the needs of the population.

Climate change is also clearly a determining factor that negatively affects the capacities of countries in crisis to combat food insecurity. However, as has already been said today, food insecurity is exacerbated by the cross-cutting instability that conflicts bring, thereby contributing to a spiral that prolongs that instability.

We must also bear in mind that the high humanitarian costs of such conflicts go hand in hand with the politics of war and enormous expenditures on armaments for conflicts, to the detriment of the well-being of the people. They perpetuate the cycle of poverty, need and confrontation. That is immoral and intolerable. If there is starvation, it is not because there is a lack of food but because of a lack of political will on the part of the parties concerned when it comes to resolving their differences. To that end, we urge the Council, and Member States in general, to maintain a firm, unanimous position with regard to the crises in the four countries under discussion that have led to damaging instability affecting the lives of millions of innocent people. We also call on the parties to the conflicts to ensure the security and integrity of humanitarian facilities and personnel, which must never be seen as military targets for any reason. The principles of international humanitarian law must be upheld at all times.

We believe that the multiple and complex causes of humanitarian crises in the three countries under discussion and in north-eastern Nigeria call for a comprehensive, coordinated and sustained response from the international community. We must take preventive measures on the basis of early warnings issued by the Secretary-General, as such crises have humanitarian consequences and can lead to famine. We must also strengthen the global information and early-warning system for food and agriculture of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in order to develop preventive measures and create resilience so that such crises can be handled better. In that regard, we support the initiatives of the Secretary-General to address the obstacles that are impeding the efforts to counter famine in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and north-east Nigeria.

In conclusion, we believe that the joint efforts of the international community and the coordinated work of United Nations agencies such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the FAO, among others, are vital to alleviating the fragile humanitarian situation in those countries. We would also like to take this opportunity to express our support and pay tribute to all humanitarian workers, who often risk their own lives in order to help others.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing on the international efforts to avert famine and to respond to its appearance in conflict-affected areas in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-eastern Nigeria. I also commend the efforts of the United Nations and the international community in response to the Secretary-General's early-warning call for action against famine earlier this year.

In Somalia, this crisis is not one of famine alone but also has many political and security aspects, given the increasing number of displaced persons and the ensuing competition for scarce natural resources, which will ultimately threaten the recent but fragile political and security gains in Somalia. We are also concerned about the obstacles to humanitarian access for those affected by the crisis in various parts of Somalia, especially those created by the Al-Shabaab terrorist movement. It will be important to redouble efforts to support Somali institutions, not only with regard to the mechanisms needed to address such humanitarian crises, but also in order to prevent those crises and provide early warnings and responses to them.

In South Sudan, despite the fact that economic and climatic factors have colluded to exacerbate the humanitarian situation there, the direct and main reason for the worsening situation lies in the ongoing vicious circle of violence and armed conflict. It is therefore the legal and ethical obligation of the parties to the conflict to cease all forms of violence, observe international law and the relevant international principles relating to civilians and facilitate the rapid, safe and unimpeded access of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to the affected areas. South Sudan needs the support of international donors and the international community as a whole, since the available resources for addressing the deteriorating humanitarian crisis are still inadequate. We believe that the humanitarian relief efforts cannot be a lasting solution to the crisis and that the only way to resolve the continued humanitarian plight of South Sudan's civilians will be through an inclusive political process that opens prospects for a solution based on the peace agreement.

Egypt is following the emergency food insecurity situation in Yemen with concern, especially given the added danger brought on by the cholera outbreak. These tragedies can be partly blamed on the Houthis' continued refusal to participate seriously in the efforts of the United Nations Special Envoy to reach a political settlement of the crisis. We reaffirm the importance of reaching a political settlement that can lead to sustainable solutions to the myriad humanitarian challenges in Yemen. The international contributions to the humanitarian response plan should be increased, and pressure should meanwhile be brought to bear on the Houthis to allow the safe passage of humanitarian goods throughout Yemen.

In Nigeria, we commend the efforts of the Government to enhance its national response and scale up its efforts to address the humanitarian crisis in the north-eastern part of the country. The Government has facilitated humanitarian access to the affected areas, provided financial contributions in response to their need, managed large numbers of refugees and displaced persons and developed a comprehensive plan for its humanitarian response, the Buhari Plan for north-eastern Nigeria's reconstruction on the humanitarian, security and development fronts. We urge the international donor community to act rapidly to honour its pledges announced at the Oslo humanitarian conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, held earlier this year, so as to avoid exacerbating the humanitarian situation in north-eastern Nigeria.

Despite the success of our collective efforts to avert famine, the crisis is not yet over. Millions of people in those areas, especially women and children, still cannot meet their most basic needs. The famine crisis has shed light on the importance of improving the coordination of humanitarian assistance and scaling up United Nations early-warning mechanisms. Famines do not come out of the blue or happen by chance. They are actually avoidable.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation agrees that we should not accept the fact that 108 million people around the world, of whom 52 million are children, are starving. We support the determination of the Secretary-General and the plans of the United Nations specialized agencies to draft a strategy to tackle that challenge. We believe that, among other things, the success of our common struggle will depend largely on how correctly we identify the causes behind that issue.

We believe that the premise that hunger is primarily triggered by conflict is extremely simplistic. The presidential statement on hunger and on famine adopted by the Security Council in August (S/PRST/2017/14) rightly noted that conflicts are only one of the factors that cause hunger. It would be wrong to slight the no less and indeed often more obvious reasons for hunger, such as global food-market volatility, global economic stagnation, slow progress in achieving sustainable production and demand, gaps in access to farming and agro-industrial technology, lack of investment, and plain underdevelopment, poverty and inequality. We believe that without accounting for all of these factors, an effective response strategy is hardly possible.

In our view, we can find a solid basis for this argument in the official annual report of the United Nations agencies, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017*, which the Secretary-General mentioned today. The report states clearly that of the 815 million malnourished people worldwide, 489 million live in conflict-afflicted countries, which means that the remaining 320 million who do not live in such countries are still experiencing equally and sometimes even more severe food shortages. Incidentally, the same report has another noteworthy statistic, which is that the prevalence of hunger in conflict-ridden countries is only between 1.4 per cent and 4.4 per cent higher than in other countries.

Of course, that does not mean that we should pay less attention to the issue of hunger and famine in conflict-afflicted countries. We believe that to seriously improve the food security situation, we should implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ensure sustainable agricultural production, make rational use of natural resources and improve effectiveness and modern practices at every stage of the food chain. One current challenge is including the question of balanced nutrition within comprehensive strategies for socioeconomic development. In that regard, the relevant United Nations entities — the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development — have a significant role to play. All of these issues are being fully and productively discussed in the General Assembly.

Russia, as a major producer and exporter of foodstuffs, is making a significant contribution to global and regional food security. Together with major international entities, including the United Nations,

we are implementing a development project designed to ensure food security and sustainable agrarian production for countries in need. In the past 10 years, Russia has delivered humanitarian assistance in the form of a total of 650,000 tons of food supplies to more than 110 States. Furthermore, every year for the past few years Russia has conducted more than 45 humanitarian operations delivering humanitarian assistance amounting to some $120 million. We view the WFP as one of the key channels for delivering food assistance to those in need, and Russia's annual assistance through the WFP totals more than $30 million. We also deliver significant humanitarian aid through the International Civil Defence Organization, amounting to another $30 million. In 2017, recipients of Russian food assistance through the WFP included Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Syria, Palestine, Namibia, Kenya, Iraq and Jordan.

Russia has undertaken considerable efforts in the area of school meals, financing relevant projects in various Central Asian countries through the FAO. Needless to say, we consider aid to countries with acute hunger and famine issues, particularly Yemen, Somalia and South Sudan, to be extremely important. In the past four years, Russia has allocated food assistance to those countries amounting to $8 million through the WFP. Since 2015 we have delivered some 110 tons of humanitarian cargo to Yemen, including two Russian emergency flights this July. Russia intends to continue actively contributing to international efforts to arrive at a comprehensive solution to the problem of ending hunger worldwide.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I join others in thanking the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing. I would also like to express my appreciation to the United Nations for holding a high-level event on famine prevention and response together with the World Bank in New York last month.

Japan is deeply concerned about the continued serious state of food insecurity in Yemen, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and other countries. The swift delivery of humanitarian assistance is crucial to people suffering from famine. Regrettably, as the Council emphasized through its presidential statement in August (S/PRST/2017/14), conflict and violence are major causes of the food insecurity in most of the cases we are discussing today. Conflicts destroy livelihoods and human food production, force people to flee and hamper food distribution. Furthermore, they impede effective humanitarian access to those most desperately in need of help, and in some cases, starvation has become a part of deliberate strategies to gain or maintain political control or military advantage. I would like to stress once again that the Council must address such problems and contribute to the mitigation, resolution and, if possible, the prevention of food crises.

For that, we need to enable a more robust short and long-term response. The international community must enhance measures to address the root causes of conflicts, not only by making post-conflict responses but also by focusing more on preventing conflicts and their recurrence. To this end, Japan emphasizes the nexus between humanitarian efforts, development and peace. Together with urgent humanitarian assistance, Japan provides development cooperation aimed at promoting mid-to-long-term self-reliance. In the post-conflict phase, we will also supply peacebuilding and conflict-prevention assistance, as well as assistance for poverty reduction and economic development. For example, in Uganda, which is taking in a large number of South Sudanese refugees, Japan is providing, along with urgent humanitarian assistance, projects in the areas of technical assistance with rice farming and vocational training through the Japan International Cooperation Agency and international organizations. That synergy for projects is designed to promote refugees' self-reliance and support host communities, as well as helping refugees prepare for a smooth repatriation. We believe that such assistance will facilitate and stabilize South Sudan's development when its refugees return home, thereby contributing to its peacebuilding and conflict-prevention capacities in the future.

As a first step to exercising this approach to famine response, Japan has decided to provide a new emergency-aid grant in December, totalling $11 million, to South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and north-eastern Nigeria. It will be used for capacity-building assistance to the local people for pest control and monitoring nutrition, for example, along with urgent humanitarian assistance. Japan will enhance measures with the humanitarian development and peace nexus in mind, with the aim of helping countries suffering from famine to overcome their humanitarian crises and achieve sustaining peace.

While the August presidential statement focused on four countries, more are suffering from severe food insecurity. The presidential statement requests the Secretary-General to provide early warning when a conflict that has devastating humanitarian consequences

and hinders an effective humanitarian response has the potential to lead to an outbreak of famine. We continue to count on the efforts of the Secretary-General in that regard so that we can act swiftly and effectively to address the risk of famine and link our efforts to the goal of achieving long-term peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

I would like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for being the first to alert us in February to the tragic humanitarian situation of the nearly 20 million people in Africa and Yemen on the verge of starvation. The Secretary-General's impetus was crucial to triggering prompt action by the international community to contain the crisis and prevent mass starvation in the countries concerned.

The link between international peace and security and famine is both proven and documented. The humanitarian situation in South Sudan, north-eastern Nigeria, Yemen and Somalia is a shock to our collective consciousness and a sad illustration of that link, since 60 per cent of those affected by food insecurity are in conflict zones. That shows the degree to which it is the Council's responsibility to continue to remain actively seized of the problem. It is why France took the initiative to organize a first Arria-formula meeting in June on the link between famine and conflict, with the welcome participation of the World Bank. Many member States of the Council joined us in that initiative, and subsequently, together with Sweden and the United Kingdom, we drafted a Council presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/14), adopted in August.

I am particularly grateful to the Secretary-General for continuing to alert us by reporting on developments in the situation we are discussing today. Many points have already been highlighted by previous speakers, and I do not wish to revisit the important points that they have raised. I will limit myself to citing five important lessons. The first is that malnutrition, a consequence of poverty, food insecurity and inadequate development, weakens the most vulnerable populations and aggravates the scale of those tragedies. Chronic food-insecurity situations create conditions that can lead to starvation when crises occur. The working conclusion is that the fight against food insecurity must be a priority for all of us.

The second lesson is that it would not have been possible to cope with the magnitude of the needs without a strong, coordinated and rapid response from the international community. But let us be realistic as well as vigilant. We are not at the end of the road. Far from it, we must continue to intensify our action in financing food aid, and humanitarian aid in particular.

The third lesson is that without safe, comprehensive and unhindered humanitarian access, our efforts to eradicate famine in conflict areas will be useless. Obstacles to humanitarian access, attacks on humanitarian workers and the fact that hunger is still too often used as a weapon of war must be reported, documented and condemned as firmly as possible. Let me point out that such actions may constitute war crimes under international law and should be prosecuted as such. The medieval practice of using sieges to starve entire cities, as we have seen in Syria, is an extreme form of such barbarous practices. The Council must therefore redouble its efforts on such issues and provide practical responses.

The fourth lesson is that such famines are, to a large extent, man-made humanitarian disasters. In that context, only political solutions will make it possible to alleviate the people's suffering. It is therefore up to the Council to find permanent political solutions to the conflicts that worsen a population's food insecurity.

The fifth and last lesson is the accuracy of our shared understanding of the continuum. Preventing and fighting famines is both a requirement of preventive diplomacy and an illustration of the fact that in order to be effective and produce results on the ground, the United Nations must make progress on the dual fronts of peace and development, including its humanitarian dimension. The presence of the Secretary-General here today has an undeniable galvanizing effect, and that is why I would like to join Sweden and several other members in appealing to the Secretary-General to come back to this subject in the Council. The Security Council must remain mobilized, and France will continue to play its full part in that.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8070

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8070th meeting
Tuesday, 17 October 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skau
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2017/840)

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17-33134 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Expression of sympathy in connection with the terrorist attack in Mogadishu

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the members of the Security Council, I reiterate our firmest condemnation of the heinous terrorist attack perpetrated in Mogadishu. The members of the Security Council offer their most sincere condolences to the families of the deceased and their solidarity with the people and the Government of Somalia.

I request members of the Security Council to stand and observe a minute of silence in memory of the victims.

The members of the Security Council observed a minute of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2017/840)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/840, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"As the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) completes its mandate on 15 October 2017, the Security Council recognizes the achievements made by Haiti since 2004.

"The Security Council takes note of the report of the Secretary-General of 5 October (S/2017/840) and the assessments, recommendations and lessons learned contained therein. The Security Council expresses its intention to take them into account in the framework of its ongoing work to enhance the overall effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping and transitions.

"Recalling resolutions 2350 (2017) and 2313 (2016), the Security Council welcomes the notable progress made by Haiti towards stability and democracy. It underlines the improvements in strengthening the security and humanitarian situation. The Security Council also welcomes the presidential elections held in 2016 and 2017, which have paved the way to consolidating Haiti's democratic institutions through a peaceful transfer of power.

"The Security Council recognizes the contribution of MINUSTAH in restoring security and stability in Haiti throughout its 13 years. The Security Council expresses its appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations country team, under the leadership of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, and MINUSTAH personnel for their dedication. The Security Council also expresses its gratitude to the troop- and police-contributing countries for their support over the years.

"The Security Council recalls the primary responsibility of the Government of Haiti for ensuring stability in Haiti and reaffirms in particular the need for political dialogue as a peaceful resolution to help defuse tensions between competing groups and to address ongoing socioeconomic grievances. It emphasizes the importance of prioritizing strengthening the rule of law, judicial reform, respect for human rights, including the empowerment of women and their full participation in decision-making, and further developing the capacity of the Haitian National Police to enable it to improve Haiti's security environment, all of which are critical to achieving long-term stability. Further, the Security Council expresses confidence that the new Mission will work closely with the Government of Haiti and calls upon the Government to facilitate the Mission's mandate and functioning.

"The Security Council recognizes the United Nations New Approach to Cholera in Haiti and continued progress in reductions of suspected cases of cholera.

"The Security Council reaffirms its support for the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on all

forms of sexual exploitation and abuse and affirms the importance of supporting victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

"The Security Council stresses that there is important work ahead to further advance Haiti's long-term security, democratic consolidation and sustainable development. The Security Council underscores the importance of continued support to Haiti as it embarks on the next stage of the United Nations engagement, and welcomes the work of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) to consolidate progress made as Haiti transitions to a non-peacekeeping United Nations presence.

"The Security Council welcomes the use of a range of different tools to support Haiti as it seeks to address its political, economic, social and security challenges. It emphasizes the importance of MINUJUSTH developing a clearly benchmarked projected two-year exit strategy to a non-peacekeeping United Nations presence in Haiti to continue supporting the efforts of the Government of Haitian in sustaining peace and peacebuilding."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2017/20.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8071

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8071st meeting

Tuesday, 17 October 2017, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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17-33140 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to provide the Security Council with an update on the Secretary-General's 30-day report and on the situation in South Sudan. I will begin by sharing some information on the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF), to complement the information that has already been provided to the Security Council.

(*spoke in English*)

The deployment of the Regional Protection Force is under way. We expect the main body of the Rwandan infantry battalion to complete its deployment in November. The Ethiopian battalion advance party has started arriving in Juba and its deployment is expected to be completed by 20 October. The main body's road move from Addis Ababa to Juba will commence in the latter part of October, subject to clearances by the Kenyan and Ugandan Governments. Despite various bureaucratic delays, we continue to engage with the Government on a regular basis to expedite that deployment. We strongly believe that enhanced cooperation with the Government on the issue remains critical for the RPF to implement its mandate.

The security situation in the country remains a cause for serious concern. During the past month, the security situation in the greater Upper Nile has deteriorated, with reports of clashes in northern Jonglei and the eastern Upper Nile between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the pro-Machar forces of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO). On 1 October, the SPLM-IO reportedly attacked Waat in Jonglei to seize control of the town. Since that attack, there have been reports of intense fighting, which has led to heavy casualties on both sides. Meanwhile, fighting continues for the control of Pagak. The continued presence of opposition forces in Nhialdu and other locations in Unity state is likely to invite SPLA counteroperations, thereby leading to more internally displaced persons being displaced towards the Bentiu protection of civilians site.

The security situation in the Equatorias also remained precarious. In Western Equatoria, there was an increase in incidents against non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Some NGO staff members travelling between Tambura and Yambio were robbed by armed assailants along the road. The compound of an international NGO in Yeri, approximately 50 kilometres north-east of Mvolo, was broken into by armed perpetrators on 26 September. Furthermore, Mudubai village, approximately 50 kilometres north-east of Maridi town, was also attacked by armed assailants on 28 September. Four civilians were reportedly abducted and tukuls were burned down. In southern Central Equatoria, SPLA soldiers allegedly killed two civilians in Abuwa Boma, near Ombaci town.

All of those incidents should be cause for grave concern, given the imminent start of the dry season, which traditionally leads to increased levels of violence with improved mobility across the country. The human rights situation in the country remains extremely concerning. Extrajudicial killings of civilians, arbitrary arrests and detentions, the repression of free speech with impunity, and the harassment of political opponents continued throughout the reporting period.

As submitted to the Security Council, within the tense security environment, the Government's security institutions continue to restrict freedom of movement for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. Similarly, opposition forces have also restricted access in areas under their control. I would therefore strongly urge the Security Council to pronounce itself, highlighting that the Government's continued violations of the status of forces agreement and restrictions imposed by opposition forces are both causes for grave concern.

Overall, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, with continued insecurity and an

increasingly challenging operating environment. Despite a highly effective humanitarian operation that has reached millions with life-saving assistance, humanitarian indicators are likely to deteriorate further unless there is a reduction in conflict and improved access.

More than 2 million people have fled since the start of the conflict in 2013. More than 1 million are in Uganda, with thousands fleeing in recent months from the counties of Yei, Kajo Keji, Kapoeta North, Mundri West, Morobo and Maridi. Others have fled to Ethiopia and the Sudan, most recently following clashes in Upper Nile. In addition, another 1.9 million people are displaced within the country. While a significant portion of the population is already displaced, either inside or outside the country, further displacement can be expected and any significant return of refugees or internally displaced persons remains unlikely. With the return of the dry season towards the end of the year, population movements — particularly refugee outflows — are likely to reaccelerate.

The number of humanitarian access incidents has grown in recent months. In August, for example, over 100 incidents were recorded and more than half of them involved violence against personnel or assets. Two aid workers were killed in August and one in September, bringing the total number killed this year alone to 18. Aid workers have been detained on several occasions, and humanitarian supplies have been regularly looted from vehicles or compounds. Bureaucratic impediments imposed by the Government have also become more constraining, including the imposition of higher taxes and fees that particularly impact NGOs.

In our view, Juba remains focused on the national dialogue process as a vehicle to move the process towards elections, with an overall aim to end the transition period. The National Dialogue Steering Committee has reached out to some opposition parties, as well as to civil society organizations. However, the credibility of the process remains in question, owing to significant opposition groups being so far unwilling to join, against the backdrop of the concurrent SPLA military operations.

With regard to the revitalization forum announced by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Government has only given a conditional response. IGAD has begun consultations and held meetings with opposition figures, including Riek Machar in South Africa, who have all declared cautious support for the process. An IGAD Foreign Ministers meeting was also held with President Kiir and his Cabinet on 13 October, during which the latter reportedly committed to supporting the revitalization forum, while requesting a series of clarifications on its objectives that IGAD agreed to address in writing. I would like to emphasize the criticality of this initiative. I urge Council members to use their leverage on all parties and encourage them to engage in this process meaningfully and without any preconditions.

With regard to the political process itself, I would like to re-emphasize a few principles. The conflict in South Sudan is a direct outcome of a prolonged disproportionate access to power and wealth in the country. All future dispensations, therefore, must rest on the principle of inclusivity that leads to equitable power- and wealth-sharing. Similarly, South Sudan has been held hostage to personality politics and conflicts as far back as we can remember. All processes and international support must strive to build institutions so that politics shifts from ownership by individuals to those institutions that must be accountable to the people of South Sudan.

I would like to reiterate that the conflict in South Sudan is a man-made conflict for which the leaders of South Sudan bear a direct responsibility. The dire economic situation and continued conflict in the country have come together to inflict a very heavy price on the South Sudanese population. They deserve better. The same leaders who are responsible for the conflict can also bring the country back from the impending abyss. All that is needed is genuine political will to halt military operations, peacefully negotiate and make the compromises that are necessary to achieve sustainable peace in the country. As I mentioned earlier, the IGAD revitalization forum will provide an ideal opportunity for that. I would also urge the Security Council to pronounce itself in that regard. It is critical that the leaders of South Sudan hear the international community's unified demand for what is expected of them.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I thank the Under-Secretary-General for

Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his briefing, which gives us a comprehensive overview of the most recent events in South Sudan.

I would like to underscore a few points that I believe are important.

First, we continue to support the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and commend its work. It seeks tirelessly to contribute to fostering dialogue at the political level, which is the only way to rekindle the peace process in South Sudan and to pave the way for democratic elections to be held at the end of the transition period. It is essential that all parties involved in the quest for a solution to the conflict, in particular the United Nations and the African Union, support the IGAD initiative on the high-level revitalization forum and speak with one voice in sending a clear and unequivocal message to the parties to the conflict on the importance of seizing this opportunity to make progress in resolving the conflict.

As we have said in the past, regardless of how united the United Nations, the African Union and IGAD may be in terms of the expectations they pin on the high-level revitalization forum, this initiative will not amount to anything if the parties to the conflict do not demonstrate an unwavering commitment to making headway in seeking a solution to the crisis. We therefore reiterate our appeal to all parties to immediately stop their armed confrontations, commit to a ceasefire and participate in good faith in the forum.

We are saddened to learn from the 30-day report of the Secretary-General that restrictions of all sorts are again being imposed on the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan by the Government, and that only 20 per cent of the Regional Protection Force, which was approved by the Council more than a year ago, is currently deployed. Throughout the past year, we have continued to insist that no State has the right to block or interfere in the standard operations of a mission established by the Security Council. In looking at the Secretary-General's report, in just 30 days we have 17 recorded cases of lack of compliance or refusal by the Government of South Sudan to fulfil the obligations established in the status-of-forces agreement. There have been all types of repeated obstructions of the status of forces agreement, including requests for documents and special permits, and that is only the tip of the iceberg. We have also heard reports of Government security forces aiming their weapons at United Nations staff.

All of this is absolutely unacceptable, and there are only two possible reasons for it. It is the result either of a clear policy of hostility or, barring that, of the Government's complete inability to maintain proper control over its own armed forces. Either of those excuses is completely unacceptable and the Security Council must speak to this. Status-of-forces agreements are not merely United Nations documents, but, as we have said thousands of times, they are also a safeguard to protect the forces provided by the troop- and police-contributing countries to peacekeeping operations. These status-of-forces agreements are the guarantees offered to all peacekeepers they are deployed in the field. Therefore, we cannot allow violations of the status-of-forces agreement.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We thank Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his briefing to the Council.

Undoubtedly, we all agree that the situation in South Sudan continues to be of serious concern. Whatever Under-Secretary-General Lacroix has said in this regard is valid. The conflict continues unabated. The economic and financial problems the country is facing are indescribably huge. It is not clear how they can be managed without the support of the international community. This needs to be looked at very seriously. It is not unrelated to the effort being made to achieve peace in the country.

The humanitarian situation continues to worsen, and its severity is incalculable. That is what makes the cessation of all hostilities and violence in the country, as well as ensuring safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors, absolutely critical and urgent. The lack of meaningful progress in the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan is further exacerbating the already dire situation. The peace Agreement is the only viable way forward to bring an end to the conflict and restore peace and stability in South Sudan.

The success of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) high-level revitalization forum is becoming all the more crucial. The high-level forum is key to restoring the permanent ceasefire and the full implementation of the peace agreement. Indeed, we are moderately pleased to see that substantive progress has been made towards the convening of the

high-level forum. The IGAD Council of Ministers undertook successful consultations with the parties to the peace agreement and estranged groups as part of the pre-forum consultations in preparation for the high-level revitalization forum.

One measure of the success of these visits by the IGAD Council of Ministers is that all the parties consulted have expressed their support for the revitalization forum and the cessation of hostilities. It must be underlined that when we say that all parties were consulted, we mean literally all parties without exception, including the former First Vice-President. IGAD will be holding a summit in the near future — we hope in December — to take stock of the outcome of the series of consultations and to provide directions on the launch of the actual high-level revitalization forum.

One thing that should be stressed in that regard is that the high-level revitalization forum should in no way be understood as a new negotiating platform. It should rather be seen as an initiative that provides an opportunity for the parties to the peace agreement and estranged groups to expedite, in a realistic and genuine manner, the implementation of the peace agreement to restore a permanent ceasefire and to develop a revised and realistic timeline and implementation schedule towards a democratic election at the end of the transition period.

Now, IGAD does not have a magic wand to create miracles in South Sudan. Like all complex peace processes, this one also exhibits all the complexities that are rooted in a lack of trust, not only among parties, but also between parties on the one hand and mediators on the other. Memories of disappointments and betrayals in the past aggravate the absence of mutual trust. The absence of inclusivity, as Under-Secretary-General Lacroix mentioned, is the other element. Under these circumstances, even the smallest progress in the process of this meeting need not be belittled.

It is in part for that reason that the efforts of IGAD to revitalize the peace agreement, which has gained encouraging momentum, needs to be sustained. The support of the international community, in particular that of the Security Council, is absolutely critical for ensuring the effectiveness of the revitalization agenda. Indeed, we cannot overemphasize the importance of the full support of the Council for the success of the regional efforts being exerted to ensure the full implementation of the peace agreement. At the end of the day, it is only through a carefully worked out political strategy that the multifaceted problems of South Sudan can be addressed. Only then can sustainable peace be achieved. Frankly, at present, the high-level revitalization forum is the only show in town, and the IGAD countries are all united behind that agenda.

All talk about the destructive impact of parallel initiatives should be thrown out the window. The consultations with the parties that were mentioned earlier were conducted in the presence of all the Ministers or their representatives. The Council has no reason to not fully support that effort, without caveats. We believe that the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and IGAD should be commended for maintaining the unity of purpose among the three organizations in the search for lasting peace, security and stability in South Sudan. The high-level revitalization forum would not have progressed in the way it has without those three organizations working in close consultation and coordination. We encourage the United Nations, the AU and IGAD to redouble their efforts and further strengthen that positive trend.

We are encouraged to learn that all the parties have expressed their commitment to the high-level revitalization forum and the cessation of hostilities. That is particularly important because no matter what we — both in the region and in the rest of the international community — can do, the success of the revitalization process, as well as addressing the enormous challenges that South Sudan is facing, will depend greatly upon the willingness of all the parties, as the representative of Uruguay said. We still remain hopeful that all the parties will seize the opportunity provided and work towards achieving the purposes of the revitalization agenda.

Finally, we recognize that the deployment of vanguard units of the Regional Protection Force (RPF) continues according to the revised timelines. In that regard, we endorse what Under-Secretary-General Lacroix said on the matter. Although serious problems linger and need to be addressed, we are particularly encouraged to see improved cooperation from the Government with regard to the deployment of the RPF. The troop-contributing countries to the RPF, including Ethiopia, remain committed to its deployment, as well as to its rationale of the Force itself.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia would like to thank

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his briefing today on the situation in South Sudan.

Once again, we lament and express our concern about the deterioration of the situation in the country. There has been so significant improvement in the humanitarian, security and economic crisis, while the people of South Sudan are far from achieving the peace and stability that they have been unjustly denied for so long. As a result, every day thousands of South Sudanese are leaving their homes, thereby giving rise to new internal displacements that aggravate the crisis. It is not possible to speak of real progress if the clashes between the parties do not cease. Several months ago, the Security Council called for full compliance with the ceasefire declared by the Government However, that call has been ignored. We emphasize that it will not be possible to establish the necessary conditions for dialogue if the fighting continues The lack of political will and leadership remains very evident.

Bolivia underscores that a sustainable solution to the conflict in South Sudan must be achieved through a credible political process and inclusive dialogue that will lead to compliance with the 2015 agreement. In that regard, the efforts being made by regional organizations are fundamental to achieving that end — all that is needed is complementarity among those initiatives.

For my delegation, support for the leadership of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is indisputable. The high-level revitalization forum is the only concrete initiative that exists, and we therefore appreciate the efforts exerted by IGAD in that regard. We also welcome the support of the African Union, as expressed in the most recent communiqué of the African Union Peace and Security Council, which serves to give new impetus to and re-establish the political process in South Sudan through the high-level revitalization forum. We encourage all the parties to engage and participate constructively. It is a unique opportunity to establish sustainable peace through restoring a permanent ceasefire, implementing the peace agreement and developing a realistic timetable for a democratic election at the end of the transition period.

Another important point is the call to put forward a memorandum of understanding on the establishment of the Hybrid Court. We believe that justice and accountability would help to bring about the reconciliation and healing processes, which are key to establishing lasting peace. We emphasize that it is essential that the process of establishing the Hybrid Court be African-led. We emphasize the Government's willingness to carry out the establishment of the Hybrid Court.

With regard to the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF), we welcome the good offices of the Special Representative. It is essential to work in harmony and cooperation with the Government in order to allow the RPF to operate smoothly. Its deployment will enable the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to extend its presence to other areas of conflict, protect civilians and provide humanitarian assistance.

In conclusion, we wish to express our appreciation to the United Nations country team and to UNMISS for the work that they carry out in South Sudan. We commend the approach they have been taking to the protection of civilians.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of your duties as President of the Security Council for month of October. I assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation.

As has already been reported by the representative of Ethiopia, this past weekend the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) visited Juba, where, from all accounts, they held successful consultation meetings with various stakeholders to the peace agreement in South Sudan.

I would like to reiterate that my delegation acknowledges the support and time that the Council puts into the search for sustainable peace and security in my country, as well as the crucial roles of the African Union and IGAD, respectively.

By and large, the Transitional Government of National Unity again recommitted itself to the high-level revitalization forum during the visit of the IGAD Ministers for Foreign Affairs, and the Transitional Government of National Unity is determined to carry out the full implementation of the peace agreement. Therefore, it is the same approach with which they accepted the revitalization process to be undertaken, as proposed by IGAD. However, the Transitional Government of National Unity proposed, and we

understand that IGAD accepted, that the Transitional Government of National Unity would participate in the forum as one entity.

One of the objectives of the high-level revitalization forum is to silence the guns and accommodate any estranged groups that might be holding out from the peace agreement. We are happy to report that the Transitional Government of National Unity has declared itself open to being involved in the implementation of the peace agreement among the groups that are expected to denounce violence.

The Transitional Government of National Unity proposes that the basis for the revitalization forum be the status of the implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The process ought to be preceded by update reports from the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission and the Transitional Government of National Unity on the status of its implementation, in order for the IGAD leadership and the participants in the high-level revitalization forum to appreciate the provisions of the agreements that have been implemented, those in the process of implementation and the ones that have not been implemented and why.

Establishing peace and security in the country is paramount to unity among the South Sudanese. That is why the Transitional Government of National Unity continues to welcome the deployment of the Regional Protection Force and its equipment. That is also the main reason that the Transitional Government of National Unity looks forward to the convening of the high-level revitalization forum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.